PUBLIC LIBRARY

Metropolitan Borough of Stepney
Public Libraries.

BOROUGH REFERENCE LIBRARY

No. (D) 36533 Shelf 942.073

V. 4358 1 S.C. 5/38.

942.073

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
LIBRARY SERVICE

Author

Title

BOOK STORE

Books or discs must be returned on or before the last date stamped on label or on card in book pocket. Books or discs can be renewed by telephone, letter or personal call unless required by another reader. After library hours use the Ansafone Service (01-698 7347). For hours of opening and charges see notices at the above branch, but note that all lending departments close at 1 pm on Wednesday and all libraries are closed on Sundays, Good Friday, Christmas Day, Bank Holidays and Saturdays prior to Bank Holidays.

METROPOLITAN
SPECIAL COLLECTION

THE PEOPLE'S PALACE
Beaumont Trust
FOR EAST LONDON

MILE END
PUBLIC LIBRARY

JOHN WILKES, Esq!

Elected Alderman of London Jan. 2. 1769

THE LIFE AND TIMES

OF

JOHN WILKES, M.P.,

LORD MAYOR OF LONDON,

AND

CHAMBERLAIN.

THE PEOPLE'S PALACE
Beaumont Trust
FOR EAST LONDON

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A., F.S.A.,
AUTHOR OF 'THE LIFE OF GEORGE IV.,' 'LIFE OF GARRICK,' ETC.

PEOPLE'S PALACE
LIBRARY.

'With thee Good-humour tempers lively Wit,
Enthron'd with Judgment, Candour loves to sit;
And Nature gave thee, open to distress,
A heart to pity, and a hand to bless.'

CHURCHILL.

MILE END
PUBLIC LIBRARY

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PRESENTED BY
J. PASSMORE EDWARDS,
LONDON, 1890.

LONDON:
WARD AND DOWNEY,
12, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.
1888.

[*All Rights Reserved.*]

D 36533
942.073
H
6434

CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE KING'S BENCH PRISON	1
II.	THE STRUGGLE IN PARLIAMENT	21
III.	THE LUTTRELL CANDIDATURE	39
IV.	ALDERMAN WILKES AND HIS CITY FRIENDS	69
V.	THE REMONSTRANCE	92
VI.	FATHER AND DAUGHTER	122
VII.	WILKES *v.* HORNE	145
VIII.	THE HOUSE AND THE PRINTERS	166
IX.	JUNIUS	187
X.	LORD MAYOR AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	205
XI.	CHAMBERLAIN	234
XII.	WILKES' CORRESPONDENTS	278
XIII.	L'ENVOI	296

36533

THE LIFE OF JOHN WILKES.

CHAPTER I.

THE KING'S BENCH PRISON.

UNTIL recently, there was to be seen in the Borough the old King's Bench Prison, in which Wilkes was confined, and where the imprisoned debtor passed that curious sort of existence of which a vivid picture is presented in the account of Mr. Pickwick's imprisonment in the Fleet.* Here the patriot was to be 'immured' for a long period, enjoying, no doubt, the privileges of what is now called 'a first-class misdemeanant.' To no one, however, did this mild form of punishment ever bring

* An accurate sketch of the old prison, with its high wall and rather comfortable air, is given in the frontispiece to Wilkes' 'English Liberty.'

so much advantage. He entered it an outlaw, and bankrupt in purse; when he quitted it he had secured popularity and fame, with a well-lined purse, and the path to place and honours open before him. So disagreeable a probation, and 'payment with one's person,' is well worth enduring for so remunerative a return.

In thus descending to the lowest strata of politics, Wilkes had abandoned many of his more respectable and moderate friends. Among them was Lord Temple, whom, as we have seen, he had completely estranged by his self-willed behaviour. When Wilkes was in Paris good-natured friends took care to let him know how displeased his late friend was, and it is characteristic either of Wilkes' independence of spirit, or of his pride, that he should scarcely have condescended to vindicate himself. There is a haughty tone in the letter which did not bode well for reconciliation.

'Paris, Rue des Sainte Père.
'*Nov.* 16, 1767.

'My Lord,

'I have suffered for some months, severely, by a fever, but much more from what

I heard from some of my friends—that your lordship disapproved several things in my conduct of late. I was only told of two charges, which I beg leave to state and answer. The particulars of the letter respecting the affair with Lord Talbot is said not to be approved by your lordship.'

After vindicating himself on this point, he goes on:

'I am again unhappy, as a man of letters, in another circumstance, which I am told has displeased your lordship: my epistle to the Duke of Grafton. I will only say about that, I am very unlucky to have displeased, when I meant to compliment. No man in Europe has so much reason to be out of humour with politics as I have; no man has made such sacrifices as I have. On several accounts I desired to have the advice of my most respectable friend, who has been my polar star. I was, however, left in the dark—and then if I miss my way, I am told that I go astray. My lot is indeed hard. But whatever my fate may be, I will preserve till the last moment

the high regard and attachment which has always made me yours.'

It is evidence of Lord Temple's generosity, or at least, of his good nature, that in the following year, when Wilkes was consigned to a prison, he resolved to encourage him in his submission to authority by going to see him. His letter is cold, not to say 'stiff,' and intimates that his visit is intended not for the man but for the cause.

'Sir,' he wrote, on April 28, 1768, 'I little thought that I should ever pay a visit to the King's Bench Prison. But the same opinions which carried me to see you in the Tower, now invite me to take an opportunity to thank you in person for your sober and discreet conduct of yesterday, manifested in a dutiful submission to the law. Though I have not seen you for many years, yet I shall bring with me the same heart, warm for the support of the just rights and dignity of the Crown, and for the defence of the constitutional privileges of Englishmen. . . . I do nothing in

the dark, and am, in the face of day, yours, etc.'

The cold reserve of this encouragement could hardly have been acceptable to Wilkes. From an assertion in the 'Grenville Papers,' it seems unlikely that the interview ever took place, and we find no answer from Wilkes in the collection.

No prisoner, during his incarceration, ever enjoyed so exciting a time, or one so enlivened with dramatic events. Wilkes was ceaselessly employed in communicating with his supporters by means of proclamations. Every day an enormous crowd collected before the walls, shouting and execrating the authorities. This again much disturbed the King, who continued to hint to his secretary that severe measures should be taken. 'If these tumultuous assemblies continue' he would advise removing the prisoner to the Tower, where this illegal concourse will be effectually prevented without harassing the troops. '*If due firmness is shown with regard to this audacious criminal*, this affair will prove a fortunate

one by restoring a due obedience to the laws. But if this is not the case, I fear anarchy will continue till what every temperate man must dread—I mean an effusion of blood—has vanquished.' This forecast of his Majesty was sagacious enough, and was proved by the issue: and it also exhibited his courage.

In all the proceedings that followed, the Ministers showed an indiscreet partiality and severity, which, it would appear, was prompted by the King. Only the day before the riot he had written, strongly recommending that 'the justices, if they called the troops to their assistance, should show that vigour which alone makes them respected,' an invitation which, as we shall see, was followed. In a further exhortation, written on the day of the 'massacre,' as it was called, he said that having heard that the mob intended proceeding to Westminster, to intimidate or attack the House of Commons, his Majesty requested in the most earnest manner, that the justices should be told to show the same vigour at Westminster that had been shown this day at the King's Bench Prison. 'Bloodshed is not

what I delight in, *but it seems to me the only way of restoring a due obedience to the laws.*' Happily there was no further occasion for 'vigour.'

The disorders increasing every day, the soldiers were repeatedly called upon to disperse the mob. At last matters came to a climax. On Sunday, May 8, the mob exhibited more than usual audacity, coming up under Wilkes' window, and threatening the authorities. Wilkes was allowed to show himself at the window and to make speeches, urging them to be peaceful and moderate. On the Tuesday, the day when Parliament met, a vast crowd assembled in the belief that he was to go and take his seat. In their disappointment the mob grew menacing, and detachments of the Guards were hurriedly sent for.

Some doggerel lines:

> 'Let venal judges and ministers combine,
> And here Great Wilkes and liberty confine,'

had been stuck up on the prison wall. A foolish justice insisted on this paper being

torn down; on which a shower of stones was thrown at him. The mob violently shouting that 'the paper' should be given back, the Riot Act was read. It was supposed that at this time there could not have been less than 40,000 persons looking on in expectation of a riot. Meanwhile, stones and bricks were flying, and the magistrate who had made himself so active was struck and flung to the ground. One young man in a red waistcoat was remarked as being particularly active in throwing stones at the soldiers—the Scots regiment of Guards—and three of the men were directed by the ensign in command to follow and capture him. He fled to a shed close by, and, luckily for himself, escaped through a side door. By an unhappy chance, at the same moment, a young fellow named Allen, son of the proprietor of the shed, also wearing a red waistcoat, chanced to enter. In their irritation, the soldiers took him to be the man they were in pursuit of, and shot him dead. Many witnesses at the inquest declared that the officer had directed his men to do this

THE PEOPLE'S PALACE
Beaumont Trust
FOR EAST LONDON

bloody act. Wilkes and his friend Almon saw the whole from their window.

As the violence of the mob increased, the officer said to the justice, 'What signifies a justice without he gives the word of command?' The order was then given to fire; and six persons, some of whom were women and mere spectators, were killed.

The soldier who killed Allen declared that his piece had gone off by accident; and at the inquest on the bodies a verdict was found of 'Chance-medley.' At that on Allen, however, a verdict of 'Wilful Murder' was found against the officer and the three soldiers, who were arrested on the coroner's warrant and committed to gaol—being with difficulty preserved from the violence of the mob.* Two were released on bail by Lord Mansfield.

Lord Chatham was reported to have also recommended 'vigorous,' not 'rigorous' measures.

* So prejudiced was the King in all that concerned Wilkes, that many years afterwards, writing to his Ministers, he declared that there could be no reasonable doubt of this unfortunate Allen's guilt, 'as he was on the spot clearly for an unlawful purpose.'

Actuated by this spirit, Lord Barrington, who saw the King on the day following, was directed to take the unbecoming step of thanking the soldiers for the way in which they had performed their task. The language used was extraordinary. After commending their exertions, he said: 'I am persuaded the troops see the necessity of being employed on so disagreeable a service, and that they will continue, as they have done, to perform their duty with alacrity. I beg you will be pleased to assure them that every possible regard will be shown to them their zeal and good behaviour on this occasion deserve; *and in case any disagreeable circumstances should happen in the execution of their duty, they shall have every defence and protection that the law can authorize and this office can give.*' We thus have exhortations to the justices, before the event, to act with vigour, and to use the weapons of the soldiery freely, and, after the event, positive promises of protection and indemnity for the acts done!

Wilkes wrote an account of this 'bloody massacre,' as he styled it, but prudently re-

frained from publishing it. But in a letter to an Aylesbury elector, from his prison, dated December 17th, he, in glowing language, denounced the Secretary's letter, boasting that it was he who had sent it to the printers. He described it as a letter of thanks to the soldiers for the foul and rank murders. 'My hand trembled while I copied what I blushed to read; and I gave it to the public with the hope of promoting a Parliamentary inquiry into that bloody transaction.'

It need hardly be said that all the confusion favoured his cause. Though in prison, he was still present to the mob under a sort of mystery; while the tragic incidents that had just occurred so close to his prison were all directly connected with him.

The vacillating Ministry, distracted between the King's pressure on one side, and their own fear of the crowd, were now to display a sad spectacle of folly and incapacity.

The Duke of Grafton, the head of the Government, after exhibiting himself scandalously at the theatre with a notorious demirep, 'Nancy Parsons,' had retired to the country

during the whole of this serious crisis, to enjoy her society. Though he had no share in the original prosecution of Wilkes, it was impossible for the crowd not to contrast the case of their idol—now an outlaw and a prisoner, for publishing an 'obscene work'—with the man who was persecuting him, and whose conduct was infinitely more scandalous.

In the meantime Wilkes's appeal against his outlawry was maturing, and on May 7th, 1768, it was argued before the judges by Serjeant Glynn, Wilkes's leading counsel and friend through all these transactions. Judgment was not given until June 8th, when Wilkes was brought up to the Court of King's Bench to hear it. He made a short speech, saying that he was perfectly satisfied with the case as put forward by his counsel, and that he was persuaded, from the justice of the Court, that his outlawry must be reversed. After a fresh argument upon both sides, judgment was at last given.

This occasion is remarkable for a noble display of eloquence on the part of the Chief Justice, Lord Mansfield. There was some-

thing *bizarre*, however, in the earlier portions, when he laboriously set out that it would be his duty to uphold the outlawry in spite of all risk and intimidation, should the law and facts support it.

This strain was maintained for a considerable time in a tone of deprecation or self-sacrifice, which led many to believe that he was about to confirm the outlawry.*

* After dwelling on the fatalities or mistakes that had attended the case, the judge proceeded : 'We cannot prevent the judgment of the law by creating irregularities in the proceedings ; we cannot prevent the consequences of that judgment by pardoning the crime ; if the defendant has any pretensions to mercy, those pretensions must be urged, and that power exercised, in another place, where the constitution has wisely and necessarily vested it : the Crown will judge for itself ; it does not belong to us to interfere with punishment ; we have only to declare the law ; none of us had any concern in the prosecution of this business, nor any wishes upon the event of it ; it was not our fault that the defendant was prosecuted for the libels upon which he has been convicted ; I took no share, in another place, in the measures which were taken to prosecute him for one of them ; it was not our fault that he was convicted ; it was not our fault that he was outlawed ; it was not our fault that he rendered himself up to justice ; none of us revived the prosecution against him ; nor could any one of us stop

Admirable as are his fine and stirring periods, we read them with a sense of puzzle,

---

that prosecution when it was revived: it is not our fault if there are not any errors upon the record; no considerations whatsoever should mislead us from this great object, to which we ever ought, and, I trust, ever shall direct our attention. But, consequences of a public nature, reasons of State, political ones, have been strongly urged (private anonymous letters sent to me I shall pass over), open avowed publications, which have been judicially noticed, and may therefore be mentioned, have endeavoured to influence or intimidate the Court, and so prevail upon us to trifle and prevaricate with God, our consciences, and the public. It has been intimated that consequences of a frightful nature will flow from the establishment of this outlawry; it is said the people expect the reversal: these are arguments which will not weigh a feather with me. If insurrection and rebellion are to follow our determination, we can only say, *fiat justitia ruat cœlum.* He must be a weak man indeed who can be staggered by such a consideration.

'Those who imagine judges are capable of being influenced by such unworthy, indirect means, most grossly deceive themselves; and, for my own part, I trust that my temper, and the colour and conduct of my life, have clothed me with a suit of armour to shield me from such arrows. I do not affect to scorn the opinion of mankind; I wish earnestly for popularity, I will seek and have popularity; but I will tell you how I will obtain it: I will have that popularity which follows, and not that which is run after. But the threats have been

and, as Wilkes puts it in the Berlin edition of his papers, etc., these 'queries' naturally suggest themselves: '1. Is not this rather a panegyric on the speaker himself than a discourse on the reversal of the outlawry? 2. Would it not have been more proper for the establishment than the reversal?' Such was the impressive and lofty tone of his deliverance that the populace which thronged the Court listened without a murmur, though

---

carried further; personal violence has been denounced, unless public humour be complied with. I do not fear such threats, I do not believe there is any reason to fear them: but if such an event should happen, let it be so; even such an event might be productive of wholesome effects; such a stroke might rouse the better part of the nation from their lethargic condition to a state of activity to assert and execute the law, and punish the daring and impious hands which had violated it. If the security of our persons and our property, of all we hold dear and valuable, is to depend upon the caprice of a giddy multitude, or be at the disposal of a giddy mob; if, in compliance with the humours, and to appease the clamours of those, all civil and political institutions are to be disregarded or overthrown, a life somewhat more than sixty is not worth preserving at such a price, and he can never die too soon who lays down his life in support and vindication of the policy, the government, and the constitution of his country.'

expecting that he was leading up to a condemnation of their hero.*

Here was now one more victory to be added to his score, and such was this, his unvarying good fortune, or luck. Or was it not rather owing to that shrewd good sense and sagacity which directed nearly all his proceedings?

But the triumph was not without its inconvenience. So numerous and complicated were the law processes in which Wilkes had been involved, that it might be very naturally forgotten that he was also waiting sentence from the Court of King's Bench for the old offences of publishing the 'Essay' and re-

* The contrast was so marked to the prosy but perhaps more judicial utterances of his brethren, that Wilkes, in his coarse style, was heard to say, 'This is a draught of *hog-wash* after a bottle of champagne.' The objections taken to the outlawry were held to be of a very trivial kind, such as: 1, that no outlawry lay save upon an information; 2, that it had been filed without the name of the Attorney-General; 3, that the proclamation had not been set forth at the times and places required by law; 4, that the Court had not been described as being 'for the County of Middlesex'; 5, that it had not been held within the county.

publishing *The North Briton.* The opportunity was accordingly seized to pass sentence on him for these offences, committed some seven years before. For reprinting and publishing *The North Briton*, No. 45, he was sentenced to pay a fine of £500, and (having already been imprisoned) to a confinement of ten months longer. For publishing the 'Essay on Woman' he was to pay a second fine of £500, and to be imprisoned for another twelvemonth. At the expiration of these terms he was to find sureties for his future conduct during seven years, himself under a penalty of £1,000, with sureties in £500 each. This judgment was thought milder than had been expected by the public. A writ of error, however, was then taken to the House of Lords.

On the next day Wilkes issued a triumphant address to his constituency, exulting in his victory, and pointing out its results. The victory wholly changed his position. 'I am restored,' he now said, 'to my birthright. The outlawry, which is now reversed, has appeared clearly to be an act of equal in-

justice and cruelty, from the very beginning erroneous and illegal.' He pointed out that the 'whole' progress 'of Ministerial vengeance against him' had been proved to be a violation of the law. 'The General Warrant has been adjudged to be illegal. The seizure of MY papers was condemned judicially.' And now the outlawry is reversed! There remained the process against 'the great criminal,' Lord Halifax; and this he pledged himself 'to carry through with a spirit of firmness becoming a great nation, without the smallest degree of private rancour or malice.' In this too, it will be seen, he was destined to win. It must be said that such a series of victories, after early defeats, made out all that he contended for.*

Lord Halifax must have now felt with uncomfortable feelings that his turn was approaching, and that no legal quibbles, however

* With a strange stupidity, Ministers saw something illegal in this temperate relation of facts, and the Attorney General actually applied for an attachment against the printer for publishing what might prejudice the case against Lord Halifax. The court, however, refused to see anything of the kind, and rejected the application.

ingenious, could delay process. For the outlawry being now removed, Wilkes could renew his action, and he now was pushing it on with all speed. The case, however, did not immediately come to trial. In the meantime, some further extraordinary disclosures were made. Wilkes, by some contrivance, obtained a copy of a Treasury minute, by which all the expenses of this series of trials were, by order of his Majesty, to be defrayed by the State. Not content with this, Lord Halifax had obtained for his own further indemnification a warrant, signed by the Lord Privy Seal, guaranteeing him any damages he might have to pay. Some time later Lord North stated in debate that the whole charges entailed on Government by the unfortunate and famous General Warrant had exceeded one hundred thousand pounds!

If such were the outlay for the defence, it becomes a matter of wonder how the slender fortune of Wilkes could have sufficed for so costly a struggle. The truth, as it was admitted by Wilkes's friend, Almon,* was, it

* 'Memoirs,' etc., vol. ii., p. 135.

was his generous friend, Lord Temple, who furnished all the funds required. 'He spared no expense, and relaxed in no exertion.' This extraordinary liberality, without which Wilkes must have been overwhelmed, was an obligation of an almost eternal kind. As we have seen, it was supplemented by many private loans. Yet it is painful to have to record that Wilkes, after taking offence on one or two occasions, quarrelled with his benefactor shortly after his release, and, it is said, they never spoke again. This fashion of releasing himself from the weight of an obligation was a common enough practice with Wilkes. Anticipating events a little, we may add in this place that the action against Lord Halifax at last came to trial in November, 1769, when Wilkes recovered the large damages of £4,000, an amount more than he anticipated.

CHAPTER II.

THE STRUGGLE IN PARLIAMENT.

Though Wilkes was now taken back to his prison, events of a far more stirring and important kind were to follow. For a couple of weeks the prisoner was in the centre of exciting and dramatic action, and, though incarcerated, his case was to cause infinite turmoil and confusion. His feeling at this moment seems scarcely to have been one of violent hostility. He was naturally inclined to be content with his success, and, as it were, paused to see would his enemies show any moderation. In a sort of manifesto, contributed later to his friend Almon's paper, he set out a remarkable and reasonable defence of his conduct, expressed in calm language, and which is, in a measure, autobiographical. The strongest part of his case he was never

tired of insisting on, viz., that the chief attacks made on him by direction of authority had been pronounced illegal by the various tribunals of the country.

Having thus restated his case, he next determined to bring his whole case before Parliament by way of petition. Ministers, when they heard of this, were aghast. They dreaded, naturally enough, all the dust and fury of a new contest, and saw the annoyance and embarrassment of such a struggle. With curious alternations of pusillanimity and intrigue, they now took an extraordinary step, and deputed an agent to the prison to make a treaty with Wilkes!

'In November,' says Almon, 'Mr. Fitzherbert came to Mr. Almon with a message from the Duke of Grafton. "If he would not present his petition, the Duke assured him, upon his honour, no attempt should be made in Parliament against him."' Mr. Almon said he would carry the message; but brought no message from Mr. Wilkes, which increased the Duke's anxiety. He then desired Mr. Fitzherbert to go to Mr. Wilkes

to deliver the same message, and to enforce it in the strongest language. Mr. Fitzherbert took Mr. Garrick with him, 'because he knew,' adds this candid friend and admirer, 'that Mr. Wilkes was not always correct in his reports of conversations.' They went on the 13th of November.

'Mr. Fitzherbert assured Mr. Wilkes that if he would be quiet he might keep his seat; but that, if he presented his intended petition, he would certainly lose it. He declared that he had his grace's unequivocal promise and engagement, upon his honour, that, if the petition was not presented, no attempt should be made in Parliament against Mr. Wilkes. And he added, in confidence, he said, that some small submission to the King was all that would be expected.

'Mr. Wilkes replied that he was always ready to make any submission to the King, because he never intended to offend him; but, as to the petition, he thought it his duty to present it, and he would not alter his resolution. What Mr. Fitzherbert had said concerning a submission to the King, Mr. Wilkes

thought, gave him an opportunity to offer a petition to his Majesty. He therefore drew up one, which was presented to his Majesty by Sir Joseph Mawbey.'*

The reason put forward by Wilkes for the rejection of these handsome offers was that he was not free to accept them. He had given a solemn pledge to his supporters, had taken on himself an engagement that he would present such a petition, and could not well draw back.

* To the King's most excellent Majesty.
The humble petition of John Wilkes,
Sheweth,

That your petitioner, having stood forth in support of the constitutional rights of this kingdom, in opposition to a late violent Administration, hath been severely prosecuted at law, and sentenced to pay a heavy fine, and suffer an imprisonment of twenty-two months; that the unfair methods employed to convict your petitioner have been palpable and manifest; that the petitioner has always been your Majesty's loyal subject, zealously attached to your illustrious house, and will remain the same to the end of his life; that he looks up to the throne only for that moderation and justice which eminently distinguish your Majesty's character; that your petitioner, with the greatest deference, submits the whole of his case to your Majesty's consideration, and humbly supplicates your royal clemency.

November 28.

As he refused to give the undertaking desired, this appeal was taken no notice of by his Majesty.

They little dreamed what a counter-stroke he was preparing. Indeed, it is impossible not to admire the cleverness with which Wilkes contrived and calculated the effect of his plans. His next step might seem trifling, yet it set the whole country in commotion. It was no more than the publication of a few sentences of comment, and was to prove the direct cause of his expulsion from the House.

By some means he had obtained a copy of Lord Weymouth's letter to the justices, which has been before alluded to. This he had sent to the *St. James's Chronicle* on November 10, introducing it with these violent and inflammatory remarks:

'I send you the following authentic State paper, the date of which, prior by more than three weeks to the fatal 10th of May, 1768, shows how long the horrid massacre in St. George's Fields had been planned and determined upon before it was carried into execution, and how long a hellish project can be brooded over by

some infernal spirits without one moment's remorse.'

He then boldly took on himself all the responsibility of publication. 'I avow it. I will go further, and declare that I first, several months ago, transmitted to the Press the letter of the Secretary of War to the soldiers. This letter is written in characters of blood. It affects deeply the constitution of this country, and every man in our island. I will at present leave it to the lowest indignation of every Englishman. I shall now only add that if I have not given to the *public a most accurate and faithful copy, I ask pardon of the Secretary of State. If I have, this I will say, that for the innocent blood of our countrymen, spilt in consequence of that letter, the writer ought to ask pardon of God and his country, and pass the remainder of his life in tears.*' This was dated December 17.

It was impossible to pass by this insolent challenge. The two Houses seemed determined to strike the first blow themselves. When they met, on November 14, 1768, his petition was presented, setting out all his griev-

ances in detail: his arrest, the alteration of the records by the Chief Justice, with a particular charge against Webb, the solicitor to the Treasury, of having 'bribed' his printer, Curry. The first step was a conference between the two Houses, on December 16, 1768, when Wilkes's libellous remarks on the Secretary's letter were dealt with, and joint proceedings were agreed upon. Within a few hours his petition was taken in hand by the Commons, thus showing a spectacle of vigour and promptitude that was praiseworthy. The question of his capacity to sit was meanwhile raised incidentally by various motions, such as that of Mr. Martin, to the effect that though Wilkes had published a seditious libel he had not thereby forfeited his privilege to sit.*

The most interesting feature of these debates was an admirable, well-reasoned

* Lord North took an unusual mode of meeting this motion, viz., by proposing the addition, that he had 'also been found guilty of publishing an obscene and impious libel, for which he had been sentenced to imprisonment.' This was carried; the original proposer of the motion complaining bitterly that he was made responsible for it in its new shape.

speech of Mr. George Grenville's, in which he assailed the conduct of Ministers. What lent a piquancy to this deliverance was the fact of Grenville's now appearing as the advocate of Wilkes; but he took care to distinguish between his support of the cause and of the character of the man—using language which proved to be highly offensive to the patriot. In his argument he dwelt particularly on the injustice of the cumulative system applied to the charges against Wilkes in the resolution, which set out as reasons for the expulsion Wilkes's various convictions, offences, etc. It became quite possible, he urged, that, on such a system, Wilkes might be expelled by an actual minority: thus fifty members might be influenced in their vote by a single charge, though not accepting the others; fifty more members might be influenced by another charge; and fifty more by another—though each might reject the whole body of charges. Further, he dwelt on the injustice to Wilkes of making him suffer for offences for which he had already been punished by the laws, and for which he was at that moment undergoing

his sentence. It was an invariable rule in the Courts that no one who had been tried and sentenced should be proceeded against on the same charges.

But he was most effective when he dwelt on the unaccountable *laches* and uncertainty of Ministers, who had encouraged Wilkes in his proceedings, and on the extraordinary indulgence extended to him. Had he not been allowed to return again and again?—to walk about London, and exhibit himself under the very palace windows? 'Had I,' continued Mr. Grenville, 'been entrusted with the executive power, he would not have remained out of custody twenty-four hours!' as, indeed, Wilkes well knew, and therefore did not venture to return till he met with more encouragement from others. The same halting spirit was evident when they had made up their minds to act. 'Their behaviour was like the feeble efforts of men not half awake. Many days elapsed before the officers of the Crown would venture to execute the common process of the law,' and he then revealed this extraordinary specimen of their weakness: 'They

had at last recourse to the shameful expedient *of stipulating with him the terms upon which he would consent to be taken into custody.*' He then described how Wilkes was ' taken, with perfect impunity, out of the hands of the officers of the law, by about twenty persons, and almost in sight of the Courts of Law.' Further, he had been allowed to take his seat in Parliament without protest. And then came the most telling point of the whole, and the most valuable for Wilkes's case : ' What was it,' he asked, ' that had at last roused the Ministers to their present spasm of action? Not the seditious libels in the *North Briton,* nor the impious " Essay on Woman," but a *personal attack on a Secretary of State!* This, it seemed, was a capital offence ! The honour of our King, the reverence due to our religion, were all passed over in silence.'

His contemptuous appreciation of Wilkes must have cut deepest. He urged the impolicy of giving importance, by persecution, to a person of his character, and whose object, he said, was ' not to retain his seat, but to stand forth to a deluded people as the victim of your

resentment. Whatever talent he had to captivate or inflame the people without doors, he had none to render him formidable within those walls. He had held forth high and magnificent promises of the services he would perform in Parliament, but he (Mr. Grenville) would venture to prophesy that whenever he did come there, his followers would be grievously disappointed.' And this sagacious forecast was amply proved by the event. The whole tone of Mr. Grenville's remarks on Wilkes himself was so offensive — he described him, indeed, as a vulgar 'trading' agitator—that Wilkes was stung to fury, and, as is often the case with arrogant natures, was more disgusted with this tone than he was pleased with the substantial defence of his cause. So inflamed was he that he instantly prepared a letter of reply, in which he attacked his advocate with all the sneers and bitterness of which he was capable.*

* It is curious to contrast with this vigorous attack the partial opinion held by the orator of the same Wilkes when he wished to enter Parliament for Berwick. This cordial letter means more than mere formal good wishes :

Almon, the bookseller, relates that Lord Temple had tried to dissuade him from publishing this production, but without effect; and adds that for twenty years afterwards they never exchanged a word! Such was the close of this long friendship, cemented, it must be said, by a course of substantial benefits, entirely on Lord Temple's side.

On January 27th, Wilkes's petition was at last taken into consideration, and it was determined that only two selected charges should be considered, which rather arbitrary

---

'Upper Brook Street, April 2, 1754.

'DEAR SIR,

'It is with the greatest pleasure that I received your letter informing me of your resolution to offer yourself a candidate at Berwick. Every public and private motive concur to make me wish you success; and if it were any way in my power to contribute towards it, I hope I need not assure you of my warmest endeavours to promote it. Your own principles in private must recommend you to every honest man, and in public to every friend of the Government, and if the nature of your undertaking did not require the utmost secrecy, I dare say you would receive every mark of good will.'

This shows that Wilkes was fairly warranted in entertaining his hopes of promotion from Grenville and his friends.

Beaumont Trust

limitation was hotly opposed by Wilkes's friends and 'the young patriots,' who were for dealing with the whole question. Burke, always excitable, inveighed against the Ministers, declaring it was safer to libel the Constitution than the Ministers. The impetuous Colonel Barré went so far as to style him 'a wicked, daring, infamous incendiary,' and 'an infernal parricide.' So the temper of the House was scarcely impartial.

Summoned to appear before them, the undaunted Wilkes claimed to take the oath and his seat. 'I apprehend, sir,' he said, 'that I ought not to continue here a moment till I have complied with the express injunction of the Act of Parliament. I desire it may be read.' This request was accordingly discussed in his absence, and of course refused.

On January 31st he was again brought to the Bar, but the bold demagogue had a fresh grievance. 'I am sorry, sir,' he said, 'to be obliged to take notice of an injury *done me by you, sir,* in the votes. I find it asserted three times that there is a record of blasphemy against me. The assertion is entirely void

of truth. In the good old Speaker's time, when a mistake crept into the votes, the error was not only acknowledged with candour, but speedily rectified. I feel it, sir, as I ought; but I now *hope a reparation of my injured honour.*' It proved that he was right, and the offensive word was expunged.

Next, with his usual dexterity, he contrived even to make another successful 'point,' charging one of his own counsel, Mr. Wallace, with having gone over to the enemy and joined in altering the records to his prejudice. The counsel, with 'much warmth,' denied that he was concerned for Wilkes at all. But sometime after he had to admit to the House that, having consulted his books, he *had* been concerned in cases for Wilkes. This, at least, seemed an extraordinary lapse of memory.

It would be tedious to follow the progress of the two charges, which were regularly investigated, Wilkes being represented by counsel. Witnesses were examined, including Lord Sandwich.*

The officials had to admit that weekly payments

After due investigation, the House resolved, on February 1st, that Lord Mansfield's orders were 'according to law and justice,' and that Wilkes' complaint against him was 'an *audacious aspersion* on the Chief Justice, calculated to convey a gross misrepresentation of the point, and to prejudice the mind of the people against the administration of public justice.' It was added that he had not made out his charge of bribery against the Treasury official. He was then sent back to his prison.

Though the House had sat till past one in the morning, it appointed to meet again at eleven on the same morning, so eager was it for the *curèe*. They now prepared to deal with him for his libellous comments on the Secretary's letter. He was again brought

---

were made to Curry, the printer, and, it must be said, with some shuffling. Thus Carrington, the messenger, was asked, 'Was it public money?' He answered, he did not know. 'What did he think?' He could not say it was public money in the auditor's office, etc. The wretched Curry later (in August, 1768) made an affidavit before the Lord Mayor, in which he swore that Carteret Webb had paid him £233 6s. 8d., 'in satisfaction for his trouble.'

back, along with Baldwin, the printer of the obnoxious remarks.

In a lengthy, insolent strain, the patriot thus addressed the wondering members: 'Sir,' he said, 'I was the person who sent Lord Weymouth's letter to the printer; and I do glory in confessing myself the author and publisher of the prefatory remarks. I thought it my duty to bring to light *that bloody scroll.* Were I permitted, I could bring such evidence as would induce this honourable House not only to entertain the same sentiments on it with myself, but also to forward an impeachment on the noble lord who wrote it. I shall never deny what I look on as a meritorious action, and for which I ought to have your thanks.'

He then requested to be allowed to sit in the gallery and listen to the proceedings, which was refused. The Speaker further informed him that the printer of the newspaper, Baldwin, had furnished complete evidence of the charge.

After many adjournments, Wilkes's petition was considered on January 27th, 1769.

Wilkes then offered to save all trouble by the fullest acknowledgment of authorship, and with his usual coolness tendered evidence to prove his charges as to the 'massacre,' as he called it. With little hesitation the House resolved 'That John Wilkes, Esq., who hath expressed himself the author and publisher of an insolent, scandalous, and seditious libel, and who has been convicted in the Court of Queen's Bench of having printed and published a seditious libel, and three obscene and seditious impious libels, and been sentenced to twenty-two months imprisonment, be expelled this House, and that a warrant be issued for a new election.'

This step was unhappily the opening of a new and fresh chapter of turmoil, and of the agitation of a great constitutional question. Apart from the broad point involved, this particular act of the House of Commons, it is agreed, was a gross piece of injustice. For the 'libel' in question he had not been tried or convicted in any Court. Nor had the House investigated the question by any process. His previous convictions were

recited, and called in aid to 'bolster up' this sentence. Wilkes had already been punished for these, and it would almost seem that the mere act of suffering imprisonment became in itself a reason for expulsion.

Wilkes himself dealt with this oppression in a vigorous, though moderate strain, on the next day, issuing a proclamation from his prison. He declared that Ministers had violated one of the most sacred rights of the people, that of having a deputy nominated by themselves to the great council of the nation. He thought with horror on what they might in future dread for their liberties from so despotic an Administration, and with much sagacity predicted what was likely to follow. 'If Ministers can once usurp the power of declaring who *shall not* be your representative, the next step is very easy, and will follow speedily. It is that of telling you whom you *shall* send to Parliament.'

They had now made him once more the popular idol in a popular cause.

CHAPTER III.

THE LUTTRELL CANDIDATURE.

We are now arrived at one of the most interesting episodes in Parliamentary history, in which Wilkes displayed his spirit, good sense, and versatility in the most extraordinary degree. Yet, who would have believed him, had he prophesied that, within a few years, the House of Commons would receive him, and at his demand order to be cancelled all records of angry resolutions and offensive epithets, and consent to eat humble pie in the most humiliating way!

The contest began at once. On February 16th he was re-elected, Alderman Townshend being chaired in his place. On learning which, the House promptly, on February 17th, re-expelled him, declaring that, as he had been expelled, 'he was, and *is*, incapable

of being elected a member.' Next day Wilkes issued an address to the electors, and on March 16th a fresh election of this extending series was held. On this occasion the Government found a candidate—but, with their usual luck, one of a singular sort—to oppose him. It was one Dingley, an unhappy, nervous personage—the 'miserable Dingley' of Junius—and who, indeed, required some courage to present himself amid all the violence that raged.

Something farcical or grotesque seemed always destined to attend the scenes of momentous interest with which Wilkes was connected. This wretched Dingley was to be exhibited as a victim to his own fantastic devotion to the Court, and furnished the populace with a welcome subject to bait. His first attempts at canvassing were disastrous enough. A meeting had been called at the King's Arms Tavern, in Cornhill, by his supporters, the 'Dingleyites'—as Lord Temple called them—to prepare an address to the King. Dingley himself was in the chair. But the Wilkites also attended in force, among

whom was Reynolds, Wilkes's attorney, who got into a long altercation with the chairman. Dingley struck him, on which the attorney knocked him down, bidding him 'go to the Treasury for more.' The candidate was then hustled from the chair, and an address of another complexion adopted.

This unlucky being was a saw-mill proprietor, and, it was said, had been induced by the Duke of Grafton to come forward.*

* The poor creature gave a piteous account to Lady Chatham of his treatment at the hustings, where he suffered for the cause: 'Your ladyship,' he writes, 'will have heard of my late adventure. In 1745 I entered myself as a common soldier in the foot-guards. The remains of the same spirit of loyalty, and the desire to do some notable act, induced me to offer my services *to snatch and destroy the dagger of confusion and rebellion*, by representing the County of Middlesex. I got into a scuffle a week before that at Brentford, and, by a blow I gave Wilkes's attorney, I got such a hurt from his teeth as to make my right hand very lame and useless'—he is silent on the retort to his blow. 'In this plight I sallied forth to Brentford. *The timidity was so epidemic* that I had not one freeholder to attend me: but of the adverse party, in number, three or four hundred, who all bore upon me to prevent my getting to offer myself as a candidate.' In fact, the Wilkites effectively blockaded the platform, and, as he explained in an address, there was an attempt

This poor 'saw-miller' died soon after, broken-hearted, it was said, at the way he had been treated, both by his patrons and his enemies.

The reign of violence now set in afresh. The original promoters of the meeting had determined with some spirit to draw up an address to the King, and present it at St. James's Palace. A long procession of carriages, filled with loyalists, was a fresh irritation to the mob, who attended it all the way, pelting it with mud and stones. At St. James's an organized attack was made. Persons were pulled out, their coaches smashed, and the servants covered with filth. The drums beat, the troops stood ready to fire, and the Riot Act was read. Lord Talbot, always ready for the fray, after haranguing the mob, rushed out and captured two of the ringleaders. An extraordinary counter-demonstration now followed. The procession had been followed by another of a singular kind,

---

to crush him upon the spot. 'I have been much threatened,' he goes on, 'with incendiary letters, but I have been brave and well until within a few days, when I have been seized with agonizing pains.'

in which a hearse figured covered over with pictures, representing scenes from the 'massacre' in St. George's Fields. On the top was a block, with a masked executioner wielding an axe. This exhibition seemed a little too elaborate and symbolical to have originated with the mob, and it was said to have been planned by a crack-brained Irish nobleman, who personated the executioner himself. An attempt was made to force the hearse into the palace yard, under the royal windows, the mob showing extraordinary recklessness, and rushing on the muzzles of the soldiers' firelocks.

Wilkes being once more triumphantly elected, the House of Commons, on the very day after, March 17th, declared his return 'null and void,' and issued a writ for a new election. Wilkes sent out his manifesto to the old tune of liberty, 'invasion of the Bill of Rights,' etc. On this occasion the Ministers were provided with a somewhat stronger candidate, though he was in many ways unsuitable. They determined to go a step further in the course they had chosen, and to 'seat'

him once for all, so as to avoid the annoyance of these recurring elections.

The person who was found courageous enough to come forward and fight the battle was Colonel Lawes Luttrell, son of Lord Irnham, afterwards Lord Carhampton. He was already member for the small borough of Bossiney, which he now resigned to contest Middlesex. The family was Irish—indeed, thoroughly Irish—and was remarkable for the mixture of adventure, eccentricity and violence which was found in families like the Barrymores, Bellamonts, and others. A century before, Simon Luttrell had figured as a violent Jacobite, and one of King James's most unscrupulous instruments. He was settled at the old family seat of Luttrelstown, near Dublin, where Simon was long regarded by the country folk with feelings of hatred and mysterious awe.* The female members

* The old house has had many vicissitudes, and passed into the hands of Lord Annaly. It was tenanted by an amiable and genial Irishman of another type—the late Lord O'Hagan—and during his occupancy the present writer spent many pleasant hours there. The name has been changed to 'Woodlands.'

of the family were of the same wild order, and the Colonel's sisters, as will be seen, were to have many curious adventures; while Lord Carhampton, the father of this disorderly family, was himself described by Junius as being one of the most infamous of men.

Colonel Luttrell had already distinguished himself by his abuse of Wilkes, once describing him as 'an infamous disturber.' 'Sir,' he went on, 'the man is covered with infamous crimes.' Here he was called to order, but persevered: 'This man, from *his infernal practices*——' then he was put to silence.*

'There is a certain family,' wrote Junius, 'in this country on which nature seems to

* The farcical extravagancies which Wilkes's affair seemed to engender are illustrated by the conduct of a Tory baronet, Sir E. Blacket, who, to secure his seat, had voted for him. He appeared suddenly in the House, booted, and with the dust of a journey on him, and with much agitation said, that since his vote 'he had been tortured with remorse.' His conscience did not let him rest. In vain had he gone abroad to still its workings. He had posted back and had just stepped out of his chaise to say he repented, and hoped that this declaration would ever be remembered.

have entailed an hereditary baseness of disposition. As far as their history has been known, the son has regularly improved upon the vices of his father, and has taken care to transmit them, pure and undiminished, into the bosom of his successor. In the Senate their abilities have confined them to those humble sordid services in which the scavengers of the Ministry are usually employed. But in the memoirs of private treachery they stand first and unrivalled.'*

All the daughters of the house contributed their share to this unenviable notoriety. Lady Elizabeth was a wild, reckless creature, knowing no restraint, and is described by that accurate gossip, Wraxall, as 'coarse and destitute of softness in her manners, wanting principle, and devoured by a rage for play.' The chronicler goes on to tell us that she 'closed her life in a manner the most

* Boswell, in the *folium reservatum*, published by Lord Houghton, supplies a pleasant story of the Colonel's readiness. Pressed to drink by an importunate *viveur*, who had locked the door. 'Come, fill your glass.' The Colonel at last replied: 'Sir, I don't like your wine!'

humiliating, as well as tragical.' Another eccentric baronet and gossip, Sir R. Heron, supplies us with this close of her adventures. 'She played high,' he says, 'and cheated much, and went by the name of the "Princess Elizabeth" (owing, no doubt, to an ambitious scheme she had formed). The whole Luttrell family having quarrelled with each other, and the Duchess of Cumberland having died, the disorderly crew lost their chief protector, and Lady Elizabeth was arrested for debt and thrown into gaol. There she met with a hairdresser, whom, for £50, she induced to marry her, and thus assumed her debts, on which she obtained her release. But what followed was more tragical. Going to Germany, she found her way to Augsburg, where she was arrested for pocket-picking, sentenced, and actually sent to clean the streets of the town chained to a wheelbarrow! She finally took poison, and thus closed her miserable career.

There was another, Mrs. Horton—to be distinguished from the lady of the same name patronized by the Duke of Grafton—

married to a well-to-do squire, who had died not long after the marriage, leaving her 'a young widow of twenty-four, extremely pretty, with bewitching, languishing eyes, which she could animate to enchantment if she pleased; and her coquetry was so active, so varied, and yet so habitual, that it was difficult not to see through it, and yet as difficult to resist it. She danced divinely.' Thus Mr. Walpole, who further tells us that:

'In 1771, this siren enslaved the Duke of Cumberland, who, to the annoyance of the King, married her. This was "the weak act of one who was always considered a very weak man." This pair, later, took the young Prince of Wales "in hand," and were said to have educated him in all his excesses which caused such scandal.

'She was a coquette beyond measure, artful as Cleopatra, and completely mistress of all her passions and prejudices. And there was,' he adds, 'something bewitching in her languishing eyes, which she could animate to fascination. She had also much wit of a satirical kind, and

could dance exquisitely. With all these charms, she was unexceptionable in her conduct.'

Thus did this admiring observer sketch this dangerous lady. She was to be, as it were, Wilkes's instrument in inflicting one more poignant stab on the King. 'So fatal,' exclaimed Walpole, 'is this man to the Crown! Such triumphs start up for him even when he is at the lowest!' It was singular, indeed, that this stroke of disgrace should have come from Wilkes's foes.

There was another member of the family in the House, Temple Luttrell, who was not without ability, but who attacked Government and Opposition with equal recklessness. The family considered that they had laid the Ministry under important obligations by their brother's contest with Wilkes, and soon clamoured for reward. The Colonel entered eagerly on the contest, declaring, 'That the idea of compensation would mortally offend him.' He had, however, given up what is called a 'safe seat,' and had certainly been useful at a critical moment.*

* In this strange family I find there was yet another

The Wilkites, to cast some ridicule on the new candidate, put forward another Irishman, the notorious 'Tiger' Roach, or Bully Roach, the terror of Dublin.*

---

member, who, when little over twenty, was a captain in the Royal Navy, and distinguished himself.

* 'He used,' says Arthur Murphy, in a pleasant letter to Garrick, 'to sit at a table all alone, with a half-starved look, a black patch upon his cheek, pale with the idea of murder, or with rank cowardice, a quivering lip, and a downcast eye. In that manner he used to sit alone, and his soliloquy, interrupted now and then with faint attempts to throw off a little saliva, was to the following effect: "Hut! hut!—a mercer's 'prentice with a bag-wig—d—n my s—l, if I would not *skiver* a dozen of them like larks! Hut! hut! I don't understand such airs!—I'd cudgel him back, breast, and belly for three skips of a louse! How do you, Pat? Hut! hut! Larry, I'm glad to see you. 'Prentices! a fine thing indeed!—hut! hut! How do you do, Dominick? D—n my s—l, what's here to do?" These were the meditations of this agreeable youth. From one of these reveries he started up one night, when I was there, called a Mr. Bagnell out of the room, and most heroically stabbed him in the dark, the other having no weapon to defend himself with. In this career the Tiger persisted, till at length a Mr. Lennard brandished a whip over his head, and stood in a menacing attitude commanding him to ask pardon directly. The Tiger shrank from the danger, and with a faint voice pronounced, "Hut! what signifies it between you and me?—well! well! I ask your pardon!" "Speak

MILES LIBRARY

Strange to say, the fighting Colonel did not show the bold front that was expected. It was planned that he should ride down to Brentford attended by a large troop of friends, but only some twenty appeared. These assembled in his father's garden, where, in their hurry to escape the mob, they broke down a wall, instead of going through the proper gate. When they reached Hyde Park, they were beaten back, and the Colonel lost his hat in the *mêlée*. He was, indeed, so pressed, that, in self-defence, he rode over a foot-passenger. Wilkes's friends had to exert themselves to protect the candidate and his party.

On April 13th the poll was taken, a 'hundred gentlemen' offering to conduct it. Wilkes received 1,143 votes, against 296 given to Luttrell!*

---

louder, sir; I don't hear a word you say." This is the hero who is to figure at Brentford. Some dreadful consequences, I fear, will happen there.' He adds that Luttrell's life was insured, and for large sums.

* A characteristic speech of Wilkes's has been circulated, in connection with this election, and is repeated by Lord Brougham. It was stated that when Luttrell and Wilkes were standing on the Brentford hustings, Wilkes asked his adversary privately whether he thought

This victory was celebrated with tumultuous joy, illuminations, and a procession to the King's Bench Prison—which stopped specially in front of the palace to give huzzas. This caused the guard to turn out; but no riot followed.

Two days later, on April 15, the House promptly unseated the new member. They went a step further, and, with something like infatuation, laid hands on the ark, declaring Luttrell to be the sitting member. They were prompted to this step by the feeling that, by merely unseating Wilkes, the farce of his re-election would go on *ad infinitum;* but they

---

there were more fools or rogues among the multitude. 'I'll tell them what you say, and put an end to you,' said the Colonel; but, perceiving the threat gave Wilkes no alarm, he added, 'Surely you don't mean to say you could stand here one hour after I did so?' 'Why' (the answer was), 'you would not be alive one instant after.' 'How so?' 'I should merely say it was a fabrication, and they would destroy you in the twinkling of an eye!' Lord Brougham quotes this as an instance of the looseness of Wilkes's morality; but it is surely no more than a rough retort. No doubt Wilkes gave utterance to it, but not on this occasion, as he was then suffering imprisonment and never met Luttrell on the hustings.

did not anticipate the confusion and inconvenience which their unconstitutional step was to produce.*

It is not necessary to take the reader through the long series of angry and impassioned debates which this exclusion of Wilkes from Parliament gave rise to. The question of expulsion was now complicated by that of disqualification, and all over the kingdom the patriots could contend that the Government had not only excluded one that was odious to them, but had grasped at the power of electing a representative for the constituency. By this contrivance a despotic Ministry might be able to fill the Parliament with its own crea-

* The successive Resolutions of the House were :

17 February, 1769.—'Resolved that John Wilkes, Esq., having been in this session of Parliament expelled this House, was and is incapable of being elected a member, etc. . . and that the late election is a voidelection.'

On the 17th March.—'That the election of John Wilkes, who hath been by this House adjudged incapable of being elected, etc., is null and void.'

15th April.—'That Henry Luttrell ought to have been returned, etc., and therefore order said return to be amended accordingly.'

On 8th May.—'That H. Luttrell is duly elected,' etc.

tures. An account of this controversy would fill a volume. Precedents were quoted, but they are readily distinguishable—such as that of Walpole, who had been declared incapable for corruption in his office and other notorious offences. But Wilkes's offence was described as 'having been expelled the House.' Dr. Johnson was required, or found himself called upon, to write a pamphlet in the cause of Ministers —a rather weak argument from so vigorous a hand. The most serious objection urged was that 'the law of the land,' which entitled Wilkes to his seat as the choice of the electors, had been put aside by a resolution of a *single* branch of the Legislature, instead of by the joint action of the three. It was thus that a warm burst of Mr. Henry Cavendish's became a regular toast at political banquets: 'I do from my soul detest and abjure, as unconstitutional and illegal, the damnable doctrine that the House of Commons can make, alter, suspend, or abrogate the law of the land.' This really expressed the whole, as it is called, 'in a nutshell.'*

* The frenzy which seized on both Houses, and their

No patriot, or patriot *propria*, ever received such striking tokens of affectionate admiration

---

extraordinary despotic temper, was further shown by certain violent proceedings directed against persons of humbler condition who had offended it. On the occasion of one of Wilkes's tumultuous processions from his prison to attend the House, a young man named Ayliffe had been arrested by a justice for obstructing the passages to the House, but he was presently released. He took an action against the justice for false imprisonment. Instead of entering an appearance, the justice petitioned the House of Lords for protection. They promptly summoned the attorney in the case, with his client, before them, made both sign a bond to give up all prosecution, and committed the attorney for some weeks to Newgate—releasing him *on his asking pardon on his knees!* Presently the House of Commons followed suit. Mr. George Onslow having seen a milk-boy stick up a copy of Oliver Cromwell's speech on a wall, instantly seized him and put him in gaol. As this was done without a warrant, and he might be prosecuted, the lad was summoned before the House, committed to Newgate, and was discharged later, on begging pardon! Another rather despotic proceeding was the free pardon of McQuirk, an Irish chairman, who had figured in the riots on the loyal side, and had been convicted of murder on killing one Clarke. The prerogative of the Crown was injudiciously exerted, and the chairman was pardoned. 'The case of the Widow Begbie,' taken up by Mr. Horne, who promoted a subscription, became one of the points of the wrangle with Wilkes.

as Wilkes. This seems to have been owing to a particular graciousness and good-humour which has on the crowd a magnetic influence. This partiality was evidenced by gifts of money and presents in kind of every sort. The 'Wilkes's Head' swung before many an old inn in the towns and villages of the country. The *bric-à-brac* hunter occasionally comes upon trifling evidences of this idolatry. Devices and emblems of all descriptions, ornaments and trinkets, were conveyed to his prison; the most usual was the cap of liberty placed over his crest; upon others was a bird with expanded wings, hovering over a cage beneath a motto, 'I love liberty.' Every wall bore his name, and every window his portrait. In china, in bronze, or in marble, he stood upon the chimney-piece of half the houses of the Metropolis. Collectors of Chelsea china are familiar with the elegantly coloured statuette in that exquisite material, representing the patriot leaning on a pedestal, and which brings in a great price.

Even Lady Temple, who seems to have had a more enthusiastic admiration for Wilkes

than her lord, was inspired to write verses on his imprisonment.*

Even such convivial beings as the frequenters of 'The Cave,' in Maiden Lane (no doubt the later 'Coal-Hole') signified their indigna-

* THE JEWEL IN THE TOWER.

A Song.

If what the Tower of London holds
Is valued more than all its power;
Then counting what it *now* enfolds,
How wondrous rich is London Tower!

I think not of the armoury,
Nor of the guns and lions' roar;
Nor yet the valu'd library,
But of the Jewel in the Tower.

With thousand methods they did try it,
Its firmness strengthened every hour;
They were not able all to buy it,
And so they sent it to the Tower.

The owners modestly reserv'd
In a decent Aylesb'ry bower;
And cannot think it has deserv'd
The *Cæsar's* honour of the Tower.

The day shall come, to make amends,
Of liberty th' exulting hour,
When o'er his foes, and 'midst his friends,
Shall shine the Jewel of the Tower.

The gods had not made her ladyship poetical.

tion at 'the dangerous and unconstitutional manner in which he had been treated,' and, '*as a small token of their abhorrence*,' requested his acceptance of 'twenty guineas and a hamper of their liquor.' From all parts of England there daily arrived presents of game, fish, turkeys, poultry, fruit—which, to a professional gourmand, immured in prison, were most welcome: 'We love,' said Elia, 'to *apprehend* our friend, in a hamper of game.'

A gratifying remittance of £1,500 was sent from the State of South Carolina, but this was impounded by the society who were proposing to pay his debts, to his great indignation — for, as his friend Horne said, 'He considered it so much out of his pocket,' if muddled away in paying debts. The Island of St. Kitt's also sent him money. Some 'gentlemen of Newcastle' made up a purse of £100 for him, but this again was intercepted. Two ladies of quality, the Duchess of Queensberry and Lady Betty Germaine, gave him £100 a-piece. Nor must we pass by the testimonial offered by the 'ancient family of Leeches,' which was a badge of office, gold

and silver medals with '*Liberty in tears*,' and Wilkes himself in a suppliant attitude 'displayed,' presented by 'The Most Noble Grand Leech, the Council and Brethren.'

Among his friends and visitors were a Mr. and Mrs. Barnard, the former son to Sir John Barnard, a well-known magistrate. These persons showed him constant kindness and attention, particularly after his imprisonment. Unluckily a quarrel broke out, owing, it was said, to some undue attention of Wilkes to the lady. The husband took the matter up, and invited Wilkes to vindicate himself, but the latter contrived to avoid all meeting, discussion, etc., and finally a complete rupture occurred. But it was to have a very grotesque sequel. The husband, knowing the weak point of his former friend, chose a most artful mode of punishing him. After announcing to him that he renounced his friendship, he begged to forward a copy of his will, *now cancelled*, by which he had bequeathed to him £5,000, with all his fine library, prints, paintings, works of art, etc., valued at even a higher sum. Instantly the disappointed legatee

set on foot the most persevering attempts at reconciliation. He engaged a mutual friend to write a letter in his behalf, 'which should contain strictures on the innocence of your friend, with your wishes for reconciliation. It may be dated and sent from Scarborough; the writer, in ill-health, thinking it his duty (*likely himself but to live a short time*), to put home the unguarded accusation and breach of friendship. If his heart is not hardened,' added Wilkes, 'he must yield and send for me, and the full obligation of the whole will be to you.' The friend, it seems, was not inclined to join in the deception and hold himself out as a dying man, and, we are told, secretly sent a letter conceived in quite another strain, and in his own interest—and the result was that the intermediary actually benefited under his friend's will. The whole offers a bit of quiet comedy truly amusing.*

* Another incident which enlivened his prison life was a sort of dispute with Garrick, of a rather petty kind. A tale-bearer reported to him that the actor unduly emphasized certain lines in the character of Hastings, as if applying them invidiously to Wilkes. Some sort of message was despatched to the actor warning him that

Wilkes, always lucky in his generation, was now to find his cause strengthened unexpectedly by two great forces—the first being the most vigorous pen in the kingdom, now brought to his assistance, the other an organization for the purpose of recruiting his finances, now at the lowest ebb. Yet, of the two, there can be little doubt that the aid of Junius

---

friends of Wilkes had noticed this, and would certainly attend to express their disapprobation. He added 'that he feared the part of Hastings might bring on many disagreeable consequences to the great actor himself as to Mr. Wilkes.' Garrick answered good-humouredly, but with independence, that there was no ground for this accusation, as he had always played the character in the same way, and would continue to do so. Wilkes, it may be said, had no very cordial feeling to Garrick, and in his unpublished correspondence with Churchill ridicules the actor's affectionate conjugal disposition when on his travels. He could even condescend to this doggerel upon the great actor:

'A WELL-KNOWN CHARACTER.

'*Mr. Garrick.*

'Little his body, but much less his soul,
All things by halves, but nothing in the whole;
He comes prepar'd by nature, and by art,
With half a head, but not quite half a heart,
Half cowardice, half courage to dispense,
Half modesty, half pride, half wit, half sense.'

was of the most value. The original inspiration of these famous letters was owing to the dramatic occasion supplied by a contest between the Court and the people. The *North Briton*, in some respects, suggested an example or model. As Wilkes had his letter on the King's Speech, which led to his prosecution, so Junius had his more famous one to the King, which also was the occasion of a prosecution. But the whole interest of the series is derived from Wilkes, and the various performers in the Wilkite melodrama, or burletta: the heavy villains, reprobates, profligates, who took part in the business. The first letter was issued in January, 1769, the month in which Wilkes began his struggle with the House of Commons, and after a few letters of inferior interest, concerned with Sir W. Draper and Lord Grantley, the writer fastened on the Duke of Grafton—then directing the proceedings against Wilkes—passing from him to the eminent lawyer, Blackstone, and dealing with nearly all the exciting incidents that were connected with our agitator's course. The sketch of the Duke was wrought up with

merciless strokes. Reminding him of the damning fact that he had once been Wilkes's intimate friend and boon companion, and that he had now become his persecutor, he contrasted this treatment with that of McQuirk, the chairman, who, though found guilty of murder and riot, had been pardoned by the Minister, while Wilkes, 'the favourite of his country, *once your grace's friend*, is kept in prison. *Is it only to murderers*,' he asked, '*that you will extend the mercy of the Crown?*'*

It was, however, in the famous letter to the King, of Dec. 19, 1769, that he gave this forcible summary of all the points involved in the Middlesex election question: 'The Com-

* That this lenity to McQuirk was owing to political favouritism seems clear. He was one of the hired bullies at the Brentford Election, who took part in an organized attack on Wilkes's partisans, in which he assaulted and killed a man named George Clarke. Another case of interference with justice seemed more scandalous still. Two brothers, named Kennedy, had been convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of the watchman, Begbie. The sister of the convicts, 'Poll' Kennedy, a notorious lady of pleasure, exerted the influence of her charms on a powerful nobleman, and secured a pardon. The same peer advanced £350 to secure the interposition of the widow of the murdered man.

mons have attributed to their own vote an authority equal to an act of the whole Legislature. Not content with divesting one man of his right, they have arbitrarily conveyed that right to another. They have set aside a return as illegal, without daring to censure those officers who were particularly apprized of Mr. Wilkes's incapacity, not only by the declaration of the House, but expressly in the writ directed to them. They have rejected the majority of votes; they have transferred the right of election from the collective to the representative body.' After rehearsing the whole compendium of violence and blundering, he concluded with this free and familiar appeal to his Majesty to pardon Wilkes: 'Discard those little personal resentments which have too long directed your public conduct. Pardon this man the remainder of his punishment, and, if resentment still prevails, make it what it should have been long since, an act, not of mercy but of contempt. He will soon fall back into his natural station, a silent senator, and hardly supporting the weekly eloquence of a newspaper. The gentle breath of peace

would leave him on the surface, neglected and unremoved—it is only the tempest that lifts him from his place.'

Here it is easy to see the writer's partiality for the patriot, under an affected tone of contempt and depreciation, assumed for the purpose of asserting his case more strongly on other points. Indeed, this partiality seems to offer strong warrant for connecting the authorship with Sir P. Francis. The impassioned violence of his nature was in perfect sympathy with Wilkes' temper; and the uncertain position he assumed in the case, his attempt to distinguish between the man and his cause, is exactly what might be expected from one of Francis' nature. It is no surprise, therefore, to find Junius, later, entering into a sort of alliance with Wilkes, and taking his side in the wrangle with Horne.*

* Mr. Hayward, in his ingenious essay 'More about Junius' ('Biogr. and Crit. Essays,' vol. ii., p. 399), where he works out his anti-Franciscan theory, makes use of an argument whose weakness will strike every reader. He contrasts the favourable terms in which Junius speaks of Wilkes with the language in which Francis uniformly alludes to him. He gives this speci-

It would take too much space here to follow the curious fashion in which Junius followed Wilkes' proceedings, but it may be said that he began by assailing him, and imperceptibly came round to be his admirer, advocate and friend. This was noted nearly fifty years later by Lord Brougham, who, in 1817, in one of his speeches, said something disparaging

men in a letter of Francis to Baggs: 'Wilkes and Horne are at open war in the newspapers. Nothing can be more contemptible, in my own opinion, nor less interesting than the whole of this correspondence. Horne's dislike and rancour are wretched beyond all description. *The other rogue* stands his ground.' On which Hayward comments: 'Junius was taking the warmest interest in the correspondence, than which, according to Francis, nothing could be more contemptible. But writing familiarly to his friend at Gibraltar, or to his brother-in-law in America, he of course said the precise opposite of what he thought of all the notorious characters and events of the day. All we have to add is that, in the case of other candidates, a less material discrepancy has been repeatedly held vital.' It is extraordinary that it did not occur to a critic so acute, that this 'saying the precise opposite to what he thought' to familiar correspondents, is exactly what a writer would do who was carrying on a system of deception, and fencing himself with the most elaborate precautions against discovery. This, in fact, becomes an argument in favour of Francis' claim.

of Wilkes, 'while the eulogy of Lord Mansfield that accompanied the censure did not certainly recommend it to Sir Philip's palate.' 'Never,' he said to the orator next morning, 'while you live, say a word in favour of that corrupt judge.' 'It was only the eloquence of his judgment in Wilkes' case that was praised. The rule is never to praise a bad man for anything. As for Wilkes, whatever may be laid to his charge, joining to run him down is joining the enemy to hurt a friend.' Lord Brougham also notes Horne's hatred of Francis, which he says seems to betoken a connection with the anonymous writer.

It is strange that no evidence of acquaintance between Wilkes and Francis can be discovered, though there is a sort of link between them in the person of a rather disreputable clergyman named Rosenhagen, an intimate of Francis', and who became at the time of the Francis letters an ardent Wilkite.

'This morning,' writes Francis to a friend, in January, 1771, 'Maclean publishes a challenge, which he sent to Wilkes yesterday, and which he says Wilkes positively refused.'

This gentleman, according to Walpole, had been one of his most noisy abettors in the House of Commons. He had lent him sums of money, but, like most concerned in this 'dirtier' level of politics, he was now accused by Wilkes of being 'bought by the Court.'

This may have been one of Wilkes' modes of expressing his dislike; but the reproach was founded on his having defended Ministers in the House; and it was at least creditable to Wilkes' sagacity that a year later Maclean accepted a post from Lord North. Some scurrilous attacks appeared in the newspapers, which Maclean imputed to Wilkes. He sent a friend to him with a challenge, which Wilkes declined to accept, on the reasonable ground that he was not the writer of the libels. This disclaimer the other refused to credit, and actually printed his challenge in the public papers. 'Courage,' as Mr. Walpole said, 'Wilkes thought he had displayed sufficiently, and blemishes in his private character, though set forth in the most odious colours by his adversaries, he had found could not wean the affections of the people.'

CHAPTER IV.

ALDERMAN WILKES AND HIS CITY FRIENDS.

The most interesting feature in Wilkes' character is its versatility, and the extraordinary number of parts he played during his eccentric course. Man of pleasure and 'riotous liver,' wit, journalist, member of Parliament, 'patriot,' demagogue, leader of mobs, outlaw and exile, and prisoner—all these characters had he played with extraordinary spirit. But now he was to enter on quite a new scene of action, of an altogether different kind. To the surprise of all, the patriot was presently to come forward as the favoured champion of the City of London.

There are many reasons why he should have turned his eyes to the City, as a new field for his exertions. There were here divided factions, the Livery being Radical,

though the Aldermen were partisans of the Court—to say nothing of the comfortable, well-paid offices which he might hope to secure. The society which was engaged in paying his debts was chiefly recruited in the City. Further, he knew that the Court faction was busy in the City, and lent support to the loyal Aldermen. It will be seen later how the King and his agents actively interfered in City politics.

On his first attempts Wilkes did not find all advance as smoothly as he would have desired. On January 2nd, 1769, he had been elected Alderman for the Farringdon Ward Without, having 255 votes to 69. In his answer to the Lord Mayor's announcement of the election, the new Alderman returned his grateful thanks, and said he hoped 'to have it in his power to pay his respects in person at the Mansion House on the 24th of the month,' when he reckoned on obtaining his release.

Unluckily, it proved that the new Alderman had been illegally or irregularly elected: 'It appears that in casting up of the poll, after

an adjournment had been mentioned, and declaring the candidate who had a majority, after the other candidate had declined, was an undue election.' This irregularity in his election proved to be but a temporary check, for on January 27th a new one took place, and he was returned unopposed. Unluckily, his pleasant forecast that he would pay his respects to the Lord Mayor at the Guildhall was to be unfulfilled. On January 16th his appeal came before the House of Lords, which declined to reverse the judgment of the Court below. The House of Commons had been equally prompt in dealing with his election.

There now comes on the scene a strange, tempestuous character—a man more intemperate than Wilkes himself, and not unlike him in his devotion to the crowd—in short, the well-known 'Parson Horne,' later Horne Tooke. He possessed great abilities—a rude forcible eloquence, in which he as far excelled Wilkes, as he did him in the sincerity of his Radical opinions. It is to his credit that he was the friend of Wilkes in his adver-

sity. These feelings were presently distorted by envy and jealousy, taking the shape of a malignant hatred which found vent in a torrent of scurrility.

At the time when Wilkes was first exiled, an odd meeting took place in Paris between him and three dissipated clergymen—Sterne, Churchill, and Horne. Each member of the singular quartett was a wit and writer of ability, and a votary of pleasure; each, moreover, had forsaken his wife. Horne was then obscure, but at the time had done his best to secure notoriety by his shameless scurrility and indecency. Being Vicar of Brentford, he had looked forward to 'rising in the Church,' and had received assurances of promotion as 'royal chaplain,' with such other particular 'preferment as was sufficient to satisfy his wishes.' But on the failure of these promises he became a rabid assailant of all government, civil and constitutional. With much profanity he apologized to Wilkes for having 'suffered the infectious hand of a bishop to be waved over him, whose imposition, like the sop given to Judas, is only

a signal for the devil to enter.' He next espoused the cause of Wilkes, then a complete stranger to him, and with much frantic language assailed the Ministers, bidding them 'squeeze out the eyes that presume to pry into your intrigues of state or lust.' Escaping prosecution, he set off for the Continent, acting as 'bear-leader' to a young gentleman, and bringing letters to Wilkes, who received him with a show of cordiality, but who evidently did not relish his visitor. Horne wrote to him, but, being of a sensitive nature, was stung by Wilkes neglecting to answer. His rage found vent in a torrent of astonishing scurrility.

He probably saw that Wilkes disliked his rough downright style, or forecasted a bitter opponent; but his resentment at this treatment had a malignant cast. But a semblance of regard was kept up, and when Horne passed through Paris again, he consigned to Wilkes' care a perfect wardrobe of richly laced clothes scarcely suited to a clergyman. These clothes were to take an important share in the wrangling that followed.

When Wilkes set up for Middlesex, Horne, who was Vicar of Brentford, where the polling was to be, rendered him many services, hiring inns, committee-rooms, and giving him the benefit of his local knowledge. These and other favours were presently to be forgotten, and the two friends, as we see, were shortly to be engaged in a scandalous quarrel, when an amount of 'dirty linen' that was almost incredible was washed before the eyes of a wondering public.

But it was Horne who, during Wilkes' imprisonment, helped to set on foot a scheme which to Wilkes must have appeared the most acceptable that could have been suggested. This was nothing less than a well-organized plan for clearing off the load of debt with which Wilkes was oppressed, and was consistent with the view he ever held that agitation deserved to be handsomely rewarded. Indeed, he seems to have been the first that introduced the 'paid patriot' on the scene, who had hitherto to content himself with applause as his remuneration. Since Wilkes' time O'Connell and some of his successors

have raised paid patriotism to the dignity of an art; and it is now accepted, that for the future the successful agitator, like his predecessor, is entitled to claim more substantial rewards than praise.

Wilkes' affairs were now in a desperate condition, and he must, in this view at least, have welcomed the protection furnished by the strong walls of his prison. Within a few years his debts had mounted to the enormous sum of £25,000: on which Johnson might have varied his exclamation on Goldsmith's debts, 'Was ever patriot so trusted before?'*

It was when he first stood for Middlesex that this idea of 'paying Mr. Wilkes' debts' was started, and in March, 1768, a small subscription was opened at the bankers'. His then friend Horne explains how this was arranged. 'Trustees,' he says, 'were appointed. These and a few others subscribed

* 'His assets were an estate of £700 a-year, out of which £200 a year was payable to Mrs. Wilkes, and an annuity of £150 was due to Mr. Reynolds, who had purchased it for £1,000; so that there remained to Mr. Wilkes a nominal £350 a year.'

very liberally ; but the public cannot be said to have contributed.'

A year later it was resolved to apply a regular system to the process of discharging Mr. Wilkes' debts, and a society was specially founded. As Horne tells us, 'The plan was executed in great haste : Mr. Sawbridge and Mr. Townsend laboured at one end of the town, whilst some persons were employed at the other, to give a general notice of the design. And the whole amount of the subscriptions during the month was £1,116 7s. 7d. ; your debts were at this time supposed to amount to about £6,000. *Two shillings and sixpence* in the pound was therefore offered to such as would accept a composition. But as fast as something was paid, something was likewise added to the list of your debts ; and it was discovered that *two shillings and sixpence* was more than could be paid. Another subscription was, however, opened for your election expenses ; this latter subscription amounted to £1,227 3s. The best method then found for a little knot of public-spirited men to procure you a necessary sub-

sistence, was to have very frequent meetings at the King's Arms Tavern, in Cornhill; where each paid a little more than his share of the reckoning, and when the overplus amounted to about *ten* pounds, it was regularly sent to you.'

Horne particularly incurred Wilkes' rage on account of an advertisement which he drew up and inserted in the papers on February 27th, 1769. 'Many gentlemen *divested of every personal consideration*, and unconnected with any party, formed a society whose sole aim' was to defend the liberty of the subject. They would support Wilkes' cause 'so far as it was a public cause,' and asked the assistance of the public, 'whose advantages and emolument alone are intended.' Wilkes was particularly annoyed that any allusion to his debts should have been made in the papers. Mr. Horne's stinging language, '*as it was a public cause*, was never forgiven. Besides, Wilkes entertained a false notion that he should himself have received all the *ready money* subscribed by the society into his own hands; what they applied to the discharge of his

debts he considered as a kind of robbery. Add to this an apprehension lest the society should gain the public confidence; and, not being his creatures, should hereafter be strong enough to oppose effectually the extravagant foolish notions he had formed of his own greatness. Merely to be *protected* does not answer his expectations; improbable as it may appear, he *dreams* of nothing less than of being himself PROTECTOR. He therefore, from its very institution, determined the destruction of the society; because he knew they meant not only *the King* and *the laws*, but the *King according to the laws.*' Matters, however, did not come to a rupture until Wilkes' release; when, to the astonishment of all, the advocate and proposer of the subscription was found to be the most bitter denouncer of his prodigality, and the proposer of checks which were to hinder his obtaining further supplies.

Wilkes was soon gratified by the fall and disgrace of his chief persecutor. The Duke of Grafton was no longer able to make head against the storm of obloquy which his own scandalous conduct evoked. He seemed to have

lost all shame ; and used to lead the notorious Nancy Parsons to the head of his own table, in presence of respectable company. 'Is this the man,' asked Junius, 'who dares to talk of Mr. Wilkes' morals ?' — an unanswerable question, and a fair specimen of the sort of useful aid which Junius gave to Wilkes. This crisis was now to become further intensified by the introduction of a new element. The long struggle between Wilkes and the Parliament might be considered closed for the present. But, to the astonishment of all, the imprisoned patriot was to engage the City of London, in the persons of its chief-magistrates, in his cause ; and, having enrolled himself amongst them, he contrived to put them forward to fight his battle. The adversaries selected with whom he was to wage this new conflict were the COURT and the KING himself!

It is impossible not to admire the astuteness which thus brought respectability, wealth and dignity to his cause. Imprisoned as he was, he had little opportunity of cultivating relations with these City authorities, and, con-

sidering his difficulties and the result, the whole was a clever stroke of policy. He was, moreover, favoured in this respect by a rather singular alliance between Beckford, presently to be Lord Mayor, and his old enemy, Lord Chatham; supported on the side of Beckford by much admiration and even adulation, and recipient effusiveness on the part of the great Commoner. This we can only account for by the almost hysterical condition of the great patriot, who seemed to consider every assistance given offered to the cause which now possessed him as dictated by the noblest motives, while, in the same view, every act of the Ministers became base, vile, and perhaps (to use a modern phrase) 'blackguardism.'

The irrepressible question of Wilkes's position and treatment was once more being agitated in both Houses of Parliament. In the Commons, abstract motions were brought forward to the effect that no one should be incapacitated from sitting save by the joint resolution of both the orders; but this was 'shelved' by a Ministerial contrivance, and no division was taken. But it was in the

Upper House that the most striking display was made in favour of the patriot. Every one recalls the threatening and grotesque state with which the great Chatham approached London to take part in the contest, he himself 'driving a "Gim-whiskee" and pair,' tandem-wise; his train following in two coaches and six, with twenty servants. On Jan. 9th, 1770, he was led into the House, wrapped in his usual flannels, and on crutches. Then he delivered his celebrated attack on the tottering Ministry, in language hysterical and passionate. He justified all the excesses of the people, declaring 'it was better for them to perish fighting than to lose one tittle of their rights.' As one branch of the Legislature had acted illegally in expelling Wilkes without the aid of the other, he now condemned utterly the proceedings of the other House in depriving the electors of their rights. In this strain—intolerant enough—he proceeded, inveighing against what would now be termed 'coercion.'

It was a strange incident in Wilkes's career that the most distinguished men, who turned

with disgust from his personal character, should have always found themselves obliged to be ardent advocates of his principles. It was thus that Burke, Grenville, Mansfield, and above all, Lord Chatham, at last ranged themselves on his side. But the most astonishing result was the change effected in a leading member of the Ministry —the Chancellor, Lord Camden—who, turning on his colleagues, assailed them as 'traitors to the constitution'; and, with an extraordinary candour or weakness, confessed he had given his support to these measures *against his conscience!* He added the rather lame excuse: 'he had often dropped and hung his head in Council, and *disapproved by his looks* those steps which he knew his avowed opposition could not prevent.' He wound up by declaring that 'he should not be surprised if the people in their despair became their own avengers.' To the testimony of such men Wilkes might fairly appeal as the best justification of his acts.

The Ministry could not survive this last blow. An attempt was made to secure a

successor to Lord Camden, who was, of course, dismissed ; but the unhappy fate of Charles Yorke added another stroke to the general disasters. Only a fortnight after the scene in the House of Lords the Duke of Grafton resigned his office, to be succeeded by Lord North, under whose auspices, as the harassed King flattered himself, 'a little spirit would soon restore a degree of order in my service.'

All this was exciting enough, but it was as nothing to the new City agitations now about to set in.

Some ingenious agitators had devised a special and conspicuous mode of airing their grievances by calling meetings of freeholders and others to adopt 'petitions' to his Majesty, and which had to be acknowledged and replied to. These were literally showered on the Court from all parts of the kingdom. It became more serious, however, when the citizens of London adopted this mode, as the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, who presented them, had the right of access to his Majesty. This allowed of attending

in state, and the King, having to receive them, could not put them aside with a formal reply. It will be seen presently to what purpose this privilege was abused. At this critical moment, to add to the disorder, Wilkes was released, having now completed his term of imprisonment, and was to take a leading part in the coming agitations. On April 17th, 1770, he quitted his prison, in a very different situation from that in which he had entered it. His debts were discharged, his fines paid. He was an Alderman, a member of Parliament *de jure*, and at the very height of his popularity.*

He found quite a new company of allies and supporters waiting for him, all of a more respectable cast than he had yet been associated with. It will be interesting, at this

* His society had thus completed their task. The account stood thus:

Debts of Mr. Wilkes discharged, upwards of	£12,000
Election expenses	2,973
Two fines	1,000
To Mr. Wilkes for his support	1,000

And £6,821 of debts remained to be compounded, which were paid off during the summer of 1770.

point, to take a short review of these personages, who, in this way, offered a fair type of the respectable British or City patriot then flourishing.

A prominent and even dramatic personage was the well-known Beckford, Alderman and Lord Mayor, whose spirited behaviour the visitor to the Guildhall will find glorified in a sumptuous monument. He is more celebrated, perhaps, for his extraordinary son, the builder of the famous 'Folly,' at Fonthill, the Spanish traveller, and collector of a sumptuous library, distinguished for the rarest volumes, as for magnificent bindings. Beckford, the father, beyond his famous exhibition, had few claims to distinction, being a coarse and vulgar person, of rather sensual tastes. 'Where did Beckford learn English?' asked Johnson contemptuously. 'Though born,' says Beloe, 'in the West Indies, and becoming a flourishing merchant, he was a perfect "cockney," of the most extravagant type. He was ignorant, and his English indifferent.' Cowper used to relate a scene which he witnessed during the time he was

clerk in the House, when the Alderman pompously corrected Mr. Rigby's Latin, who had misquoted the line, 'Sine cerere et Baccho friget Venus'—ignorantly putting 'scelere' for 'cerere.' Rigby was not slow to thank him 'for teaching him Latin,' promising in return 'to teach him English.' He made himself obtrusively conspicuous as 'a noisy, vulgar flatterer of Lord Chatham,' Walpole says, and was as 'bombastic as became the priest of such an idol.' Cumberland, who met him at Bubb Dodington's, describes, with the true instinct of a dramatist, a scene which brought out the absurdities of the Alderman's character. In some discussion Beckford was exhibiting himself as loud, voluble and self-sufficient, floundering and blundering, galled by many hits which he could not parry, yet laying himself the more open by his incoherence; while the other, lolling in his easy chair, in perfect apathy and self-command —dozing sometimes, and even snoring— would wake up now and then to deal fresh blows, ridiculing his adversary with all the resources of wit and irony.

The incident with which he was to close his life is an interesting one, though partisan writers have attempted to represent it as apocryphal.

Other leading spirits of the Corporation were Aldermen Townshend, Sawbridge, and Oliver, with the oddly-named Brass-Crosby. Sir R. Ladbrooke, Trecothick, an Beckford were members for the City, Townshend and Sawbridge Sheriffs. As one who knew Sawbridge and Townshend well declared, 'never had the office been filled by such singular beings.' They were at this time friends of Wilkes, a little later his bitter enemies, and were ready to pay with their persons for their devotion to his cause. Townshend carried his so far as to allow his goods to be distrained for the land-tax, for the reason that, owing to Wilkes's expulsion, the country was not legally represented. He had married a natural daughter of Lord Coleraine's—who inherited her father's estates, but as she had been born abroad, and not naturalized, these were held to be forfeited to the Crown. By the influence of Lord Holland they were restored. 'He

was a firm and steady friend,' says Beloe; 'and so tenacious of his promise that he would leave the remotest part of the kingdom, and the most delightful society, to attend and give his vote at Guildhall, though for the meanest individual, and the humblest office. He was very proud and tenacious of his dignity among the great, though of the most conciliating affability with his inferiors. He would travel from one end of the kingdom to the other without a servant, and with a small change of linen in a leathern trunk behind the saddle.' This was certainly, as 'the sexagenarian' adds, 'a singular character.' It was unlucky for Wilkes that he should have estranged such a man, who was likely to prove a dangerous and uncompromising foe.

Alderman Sawbridge, another of the political conspirators, was at that time a furious Wilkite. He was always in a state of exasperation against the 'powers that be': a feeling which his friends could only trace to the treatment an ancestor of his had received from the Government of the day. The same unreasonable hostility was shown in the writ-

ings of his sister, the well-known Mrs. Catherine Macaulay, 'the celebrated female historian,' to whom Johnson suggested a pleasant test of true equality, viz., that she should ask 'John, the footman, to sit down at table with them.' Sawbridge regularly made an annual motion for short Parliaments, but, above all, distinguished himself by his passionate advocacy of Wilkes's cause.

Such were these two supporters. Townshend, thinking Wilkes to be harshly and illegally treated, took up his cause with warmth, though he so disliked Wilkes himself that he was determined, Horne tells us, 'never to himself have any connection or intercourse with Mr. Wilkes, whose character he knew too well not to detest. But when the House of Commons were determined unjustly to expel you, Mr. Townshend then consented that I should introduce him to you; and he spoke to you for the first time in the committee-room of the House of Commons, when they voted your petition to be *false, groundless, etc.*' He helped generally to extricate Wilkes from his debts, and he helped

him in other ways. But he declined to follow him in his capricious changes of principle.

It is melancholy to have to add that both these warm friends, like so many others, became alienated from Wilkes. Sawbridge had ventured to approve of Horne's behaviour in his dispute with Wilkes, and though he had disposed of an estate to furnish funds to this cause, he incurred Wilkes's bitter enmity. When Sawbridge* stood for London, Wilkes refused to support him; and in the case of the disputes of the two printers with the House of Commons, because Townshend ventured to exercise his independent judgment, Wilkes became his bitter enemy.

Yet another partisan of Wilkes was Alderman Oliver, an amiable, high-principled man, whose 'gentlemanly manners' were spoken of with some astonishment as the product of the City. A remarkable instance of his per-

* Yet Wilkes could gibe at this old supporter, in such doggerel as this:

'The lion's skin in vain he wears,
He cannot hide the ass's ears.'

suasive powers was his coming on the hustings to announce that his brother, who was the accepted candidate, was too ill to present himself; and then suggesting that they should take him in his stead, which was agreed to. He also was to become estranged or disgusted.

CHAPTER V.

THE REMONSTRANCE.

With such elements it may be conceived what agitations were likely to follow. The attack on the King had been begun by 'a petition of the freeholders of Middlesex,' adopted at a meeting held in April, 1769. Here we find Townshend, Sawbridge, Glynn, and the usual 'Wilkites,' who were duly received at St. James'. Their tale of grievances was drawn up by Wilkes, and related almost entirely to Wilkes's own sorrows. It spoke of 'mobs hired by the Ministry'—'odious and vexatious claims of the Crown'—'wicked attempts to establish a standing army,' by giving the Crown authority over the militia. They finally implored of him '*to banish from your royal favour for ever those evil and pernicious counsellors who have*

endeavoured to alienate the affection of your Majesty's subjects '—a new and insolent strain, which was received by the King with cold contempt.

This had been followed by an act more far-reaching in its results—the famous petition of the Livery of London, presented by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, on July 5th, 1769, and which was conceived in the most defiant strain, and where the insolence is more disguised.

'Most Gracious Sovereign,

'We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Livery of the City of London, with *all the humility which is due from free subjects to their lawful sovereign:* but with all the anxiety which the sense of this present oppression and the just dread of future mischief . . . and *from the secret unremitting influence of the worst of counsellors.*' They then spoke of '*the desperate attempts* which have been, and are, too successfully made to destroy that constitution, *to the spirit of which we owe the relation which subsists between your*

Majesty and the subjects of these realms, and to subvert those sacred laws which our ancestors have sealed with their blood.'

They then enumerate a long list of grievances—the general warrants ; invasion of the right of trial by jury ; the evading of the Habeas Corpus ; imprisonment without trial ; employment of military force ; the 'screening more than one murderer from justice ;' taxing the colonies, etc. Finally, 'after having insulted and defeated the law on different occasions and by different contrivances, both at home and abroad, they (the Ministers) have at length completed their design, by violently wresting from the people *the last sacred right we had left*, the right of election, by the unprecedented seating of a candidate notoriously set up and chosen by themselves. All this they have effected by corruption ; by a scandalous misapplication *and embezzlement of the public treasure*, and a shameful prostitution of public honours. We most earnestly beseech your majesty to grant us redress. It is for the purpose of redress alone, and for such occasions as the present, *that those great*

and extensive powers are entrusted to the Crown by the wisdom of the constitution which your Majesty's illustrious family was chosen to defend, and which we trust in God it will ever continue to support.'

This unprecedented appeal contained in every line something offensive—dealing in scarcely veiled menaces, and even 'lecturing' the King on what they considered were his duties.

It seemed advisable to the Court to take no notice of this paper, and after many months the whole appeared to be forgotten. But in March, 1770, on the eve of Wilkes's release, it was of a sudden discovered that an indignity had been put on the City. It was now determined to press the King for an answer, and three very formidable instruments were drawn up, called 'The Address, Remonstrance, and Petition of the City of London,' the second purporting to be a serious expostulation with his Majesty for his neglect of the wishes of his subjects. The two Sheriffs undertook the office of carrying

it to Court. They attended on the 6th of March, but were sent away, the King writing to his Secretary of State: 'I ordered it should be told them that it was an improper time, and that the Court days were the time they ought to deliver any message. I wish,' he added, 'you would obtain the opinion of Lord Mansfield, whether they can be with propriety received. That evidently would be the *most likely way of putting an end to this stuff.*' His Majesty thought lightly of the matter, but 'this stuff' was to embarrass him sorely.

On the following day the irrepressible Sheriffs presented themselves once more to know when the King would fix to receive the '*City Address, Remonstrance, and Petition.*'

After waiting till the levee was over, they were admitted to the closet, when Sheriff Townshend addressed the King, explaining that they had taken the earliest opportunity to wait on him, 'but, being prevented by one of the household, who informed them that his Majesty could not receive them, they came

there on that day to know when it would be convenient.'

The King replied: 'As the case is entirely new, I will take time to consider it, and transmit you my answer.'

In a few days the Sheriffs received a curious epistle from Lord Weymouth, which seemed to insinuate that they were unaccredited. His Majesty was always ready to receive his subjects, but the present form of application 'was altogether new.' The Secretary was directed, therefore, to inquire 'in what manner this paper was authenticated, and what the nature of the assembly was in which this measure was adopted.' This stupid query seemed to turn on the point that the remonstrance was the work of the Radical Livery, there being a majority of loyalists among the Aldermen.

The Sheriffs took no notice of the Secretary's questions; but on the following day again repaired to St. James's. After being kept waiting some time, Lord Bolingbroke came out and demanded whether 'they came with a message, or with a fresh message?'

They answered, 'with a message.' The Secretaries of State then presented themselves, and asked: 'Had they received the letter?' and 'Did they come in consequence of the letter?' They said they did. Then this dialogue followed:

Lord Weymouth: 'Would it not be more proper to send an answer in writing through me?'

The Sheriffs: 'We act Ministerially. As Sheriffs of London, we have a right to an audience, and cannot communicate to any other person than to the King the subject of our message.'

Lord Weymouth: 'I do not dispute your right to an audience, but *would it not be better, and more accurate*, to give your message in writing?'

The Sheriffs: 'We know the value and consequence of the citizens' right to apply immediately to the King, and not to a third person; and *we do not mean* that any of their rights and privileges shall be betrayed by our means.'

Being thus found proof against Lord

Weymouth's 'wheedlings,' these persevering deputies were at last introduced, on which they addressed the King in this intrepid style:

'When we had last the honour to appear before your Majesty, your Majesty was graciously pleased to promise an answer through the Secretary of State; but we had, yesterday, questions proposed to us by Lord Weymouth. In answer to which we beg leave humbly to inform your Majesty that the application which we make, we make as Sheriffs of the City of London, by the direction of the Livery in the common hall assembled. The address, and remonstrance, and petition, to be presented to your Majesty by their chief magistrate, is the act of the citizens of London in their greatest court, and it is ordered by them to be properly authenticated as their act.'

It was unusual and embarrassing to find 'the citizens' speaking so sternly to their monarch. His Majesty's reply, as cold and indifferent as he could make it, was, '*I will consider of the answer you have given me.*'

A little graciousness might have saved all the inconvenience that was now to follow. But the King was still thinking of his 'point,' and that the City was tricking him in some way.

'This bone of contention,' he wrote, 'will never end; I therefore am thoroughly of opinion that, as the Sheriffs (though falsely) have insinuated that it is properly authenticated, the least inconvenience will be the receiving them on the Throne, and that the sober party cannot be hurt with it when they find the answer is firm, which will draw on a joint Address from the two Houses of Parliament, and will enable the Aldermen and Common Councilmen who dissented from this strange libel, on my having received it, to write a letter to one of my Principal Secretaries of State protesting against it, who may in answer say something civil from me in return.'

An answer that shows how deeply the Court party was engaged in City intrigues.

The remonstrance thus presented complained of that secret, malign influence which,

through each successive Administration, had defeated every good and suggested every bad intention; the House of Commons had deprived the people of their dearest rights. '*They have done a deed more ruinous in consequences than the levying of ship-money by Charles I. or the dispensing power assumed by James II.* . . . The House of Commons do not represent the people. We owe to your Majesty an obedience *under the restriction of the laws* for the calling and duration of Parliaments, and your Majesty owes to us that our representatives be free from the force of arms, or corruption should be preserved to us in them. . . . We call God and man to witness that as we do not owe our liberty to these nice and subtle distinctions which places and pensions have invented, *so neither will* we be cheated of them.'

Such was this daring and determined protest. The King acknowledged it with proper dignity, but in a curt, displeased tone.

The City, however, not to be thus repulsed, now drew up yet another 'remonstrance;' and on March 14th, an enormous party, two

hundred Councillors, with Beckford at their head, invaded the palace. This appeal was even more strongly worded than the first, and it is probable was the composition of Alderman Wilkes, or Horne.

They were unwilling to believe, they told his Majesty, that he would slight their desires; yet their complaints remained unanswered. They now again addressed themselves to 'the father of his people,' and repeated their application 'with greater propriety, because we see the *instruments of our wrongs particularly distinguished by your Majesty's bounty and favour. Under the same secret and malign influence,* the House of Commons has deprived them of their rights.' They then reminded the King of '*what he owed them,*' which is 'what we successfully struggled for,' etc.

It was noted that when the Common Serjeant came to the stronger passages he grew so confused and faltering that the Town Clerk had to take the paper from him and continue the reading.

The King listened to them calmly, then

gave his answer with much dignity and severity. He said 'he was much concerned to have to listen to language that was disrespectful to him, injurious to his Parliament, and irreconcilable to the constitution. He had always made the law of the land his guide, and had never invaded any of the powers of the constitution.' But as he spoke his countenance was observed to be clouded, and murmurs broke from the courtiers. The Court faction declared that it was impossible to pass by this insolence, though it was at the same time inclined to talk of 'the lowest rabble that attended,' with only 'a few Aldermen,' etc. It was proposed to bring the business before the House—an inferior creature connected with the City Companies, one Lovell, was to be selected as a scapegoat, and this would compel the Lord Mayor and Townshend, both members, to come forward and acknowledge what they had done.

Accordingly, on March 19th, Sir Thomas Clavering moved—'That to deny the legality of the present Parliament, and to assert that the proceedings thereof are not valid, is highly

unwarrantable, and has a manifest tendency to disturb the peace of the kingdom by withdrawing his Majesty's subjects from their obedience to the laws of the realm.' But to the annoyance and surprise of the party, the Lord Mayor and the others rose in their places, and instead of 'shirking,' actually claimed to glory in what they had done, and offered to take all the consequences. The motion was carried, but nothing came of it. It was said 'the Court did not know what to do with the motion now they had it.' With a view to give strength to the fresh attack now about to be made on the King, Lord Chatham came forward in the House of Lords with a motion on the sense of the remonstrance. It is extraordinary to find a man of his position and lofty standing adopting this unworthy alliance to secure what he was so vehemently desirous of.* On May 14th he

* Those who are fond of tracing likenesses between statesmen will be likely to discover a curious parallel between the behaviour of Lord Chatham at this time, and that of an eminent personage of our own time. Both took up with a sudden vehemence the cause of men whom they had before denounced as enemies to the State

moved an address in the Lords praying for a dissolution ; and the City, no doubt prompted by Chatham's friend, the Lord Mayor, followed suit. It was indeed said that Lord Chatham had himself written the new civic remonstrance, but it had been claimed by Horne's friends as his composition.*

At last, May 23rd being fixed for the day of presentation, an imposing civic demonstration was organized, and a long procession set out from the City. The King, seated on his throne, received the deputation. He had, of course, previously seen the paper, and he privately admitted it was 'less offensive'

---

and society. Both frantically espoused the cause of the lower classes against the Government. Both maintained that the House of Commons did not represent the people, *i.e.*, their cause. Both wrote excited letters to their supporters.

* It was Horne who prepared the account of the King's reception of the first remonstrance at Court, when he spoke of the King as 'fiddling while Rome burned.' This he justified in an impudent strain, 'declaring that as the expression had given offence to certain persons, it was not his intention to falsify an historical fact, or to *give offence to better memories*, therefore he hopes that it will be admitted as a recompense, if he now declares that Nero did *not* fiddle whilst Rome was burning.'

than he had anticipated, and had determined that the 'whole *performance*,' so he styled it, should receive '*a short, dry answer*,' which should refer them to the one they had received already. But he little anticipated the scene that was to follow. Beckford came forward and read an address, conceived in the old defiant spirit, in which he spoke of 'the awful censure' passed on them in the King's reply, and the secret machinations which prompted it. But they were 'determined to abide by the rights and liberties' their fathers gained at the Revolution, and demanded once more the dissolution of Parliament, and the removal of 'evil Ministers.'

The King, in an angry, displeased tone, made this reply :

'I should have been wanting to the public, as well as to myself, if I had not expressed my dissatisfaction at the late address.

'My sentiments on that subject continue the same ; and I should ill deserve to be considered as the father of my people, if I should suffer myself to be prevailed upon to make such an use of my prerogative, as I

cannot but think inconsistent with the interest and dangerous to the constitution of the kingdom.'

The usual course was that the deputation should then kiss hands and withdraw. But on this occasion, in anticipation of some such 'short, dry' rebuke, it had been concerted between Beckford and Horne that he should boldly reply to his Majesty's reply; and Horne was said to have furnished the Lord Mayor with the famous sentences he now uttered. Accordingly, to the consternation of the courtiers, instead of 'backing out,' Beckford abruptly approached the throne, and said 'with great presence of mind and fluency of language,' as Walpole heard:

'Most gracious Sovereign!

'Will your Majesty be pleased so far to condescend as to permit the Mayor of your loyal City of London to declare, in your royal presence, on behalf of his fellow-citizens, how much the bare apprehension of your Majesty's displeasure would at all times affect their minds? The declaration of that displeasure

has already filled them with inexpressible anxiety and with the deepest affliction.

'Permit me, sire, to assure your Majesty that your Majesty has not, in all your dominions, any subjects more faithful, more dutiful, or more ready to sacrifice their lives and fortunes in the maintenance of the true honour and dignity of your crown.

'We do, therefore, with the greatest humility and submission, most earnestly supplicate your Majesty, that you will not dismiss us from your presence without expressing a more favourable opinion of your faithful citizens, and without some comfort, without some prospect at least of redress.

'Permit me, sire, to observe, that whoever has already dared, or shall hereafter endeavour, by false insinuations and suggestions, to alienate your Majesty's affections from your loyal subjects in general, and from the City of London in particular, is an enemy to your Majesty's person and family, a violator of the public peace, and a betrayer of our happy constitution, as it was established at the glorious Revolution.'

At the last allusion to the Revolution the King changed colour; but the scene concluded without confusion or loss of dignity: the party were allowed to kiss hands, and then withdrew.*

It shows the *political* delirium to which a great mind can be subject when we find Lord Chatham perfectly enraptured with this burst. He wrote to the bold magistrate in a transport of compliment, to tell him how 'truly he respected and loved the spirit he displayed —the spirit of old England spoke that never-

* It has, indeed, been often repeated that this bold harangue was written *après coup.* Mr. Jesse quotes a letter of Sheriff Townshend to Lord Chatham, in which he says that the Lord Mayor would try to recollect what he said, and that 'I fancy the *substance* of the speech will appear in the paper to-morrow.' But this was merely a speculation of Townshend's. Writing later, he says positively that 'the speech in the *Public Advertiser* of yesterday (May 24th) *is verbatim:* only the words "and necessary" being left out before "Revolution."' This minute correction, it will be seen, proves that it was a studied and prepared deliverance, and that the words recorded are those that were delivered. Apart from this, only such bold and fearless language as is reported could have accounted for the annoyance and admiration that resulted.

to-be-forgotten day. His mind was big with admiration and affection. Adieu, then, for the present (to call you by the most honourable of titles), *true* Lord Mayor of London —that is, first magistrate of the first city of the world; your *mayoralty will be revered when all the constitution is destroyed and forgotten.*'

He then took up the case of the City, for whom the iniquity of Ministers had been appalling—as it were, crying to heaven—with other extravagance. The general infamy was concentrated in their tyranny towards the City. He laboured on this one topic in and out of season. Of the King's answer to the remonstrance, which, after all, only concerned a matter of personal demeanour, and raised no constitutional point, he wrote to Lord Rockingham: 'A more unconstitutional piece never came from the throne, nor any more dangerous.'

He planned three motions in this form, to which he required, in a haughty strain, due support from Lord Rockingham and his friends. It is amusing to contrast the cold

answers he received with his own excited state :

'It does not strike me that it is particularly called for, because I cannot admit that, though some people may throw out suspicions that there is lukewarmness, that we and others do not adhere to dissolution, yet I must hold an opinion that it is not for your honour, nor for ours, to suffer ourselves *to be sworn every day to keep our word.*'

Lord Chatham wrote in reply :

'I think it for our honour to seek every occasion to let the people see we demand it ; and the Crown know by perpetual reiteration that we will never acquiesce without it.'

Here again will be noted the curious parallel with recent events. Lord Rockingham was dissident, or 'Dissentient Liberal,' asit is called, and declined to act under hysterical pressure.

Lord Chatham moved in the House of Lords that the decision of the House of Commons as to Wilkes should be reversed. In a fiercer spirit, he also moved 'that the

answer which the King had been advised to give was disrespectful to his Majesty, injurious to his Parliament, and irreconcilable to the constitution.' This tremendous indictment can only excite a smile.*

Wishing to force on a dissolution, he lastly moved an address, which was not supported. The display was in part a failure. Lord Rockingham's enigmatical reference to 'being every day sworn to keep our word,' was an allusion to the pressure exercised by Beckford and City politicians, who had a vulgar distrust of their Whig allies, and wished to bind them down by carefully-drawn formulas; while Lord Chatham saw nothing but what was good and noble in all they did. But he was speedily, like all such exaggerated panegyrists, to be undeceived.

Horne, who seems clearly to have been the moving spirit in these City agitations, exercised his ingenuity in what he called 'fixing' them, so that when the 'Rockinghams' came

* The speech is now to be read in the Guildhall, engraved on the base of the fine statue erected by the citizens to the memory of their chief magistrate.

into office they should not be able to shuffle out of their engagements. When Beckford was giving his great City entertainment, which attracted such wonder and admiration, he and Horne laid a plan by which a solemn binding declaration as to wider suffrage, etc., should be signed by all the guests; and Horne was instructed to prepare the articles in 'so cautious and precise a way' that there should be no escape. Lord Rockingham, however, firmly objected to pay such a toll in return for his dinner, and, we are told, 'flatly refused' to sign, to the indignation of Beckford, who declared 'that he should eat none of his broth.'*

The Great Commoner soon began to find the inconvenience of this despotism, and was not a little disgusted at Horne's exhibitions. He later became angered at the resistance to the press-warrants, which he wished never to hear mentioned. But he little dreamed when the City was re-

*Chatham's hysterics Burke noted with bitter contempt. 'It is pleasant to hear him (Chatham) talk of *the great extensive public*, who never conversed but with a set of low toad-eaters.'

sounding with applause at his patriotic attacks on the House of Lords that a little plot was on foot to 'fix *him*' also.

An effusive address was prepared, overflowing with grateful thanks for his conduct, and particularly for a statement as to short Parliaments, which, for a purpose, it was assumed he had uttered. They thanked him for 'his wishes and declaration that his endeavours shall be used that Parliaments be restored to their original purity by shortening their duration.'

The object of this trick—which seems to have been contrived by Horne—was his embarrassment; for if he assented to their statement, he would offend the 'Rockinghams,' who were against short Parliaments; and if he repudiated them, he would incur popular odium.

The answer seems hardly worthy of the Great Commoner: 'Permit me to say there has been some misapprehension (on this point); for, with all my deference to the City, I am bound to declare that I cannot recommend triennial Parliaments as a remedy,

etc. ; *but I am ready to submit my opinion to better judgment if the wish for that measure shall become prevalent in the kingdom.*'

After this, though he eventually adopted the view that was desired, his popularity waned rapidly.

Returning to the contest between the King and the Corporation, we find them now highly indignant at the way in which they had been received, and determined to make his Majesty feel their resentment. On the birth of a princess, it was customary to present an address, and it was now resolved to pass over this addition to the Royal Family without notice. This was due to the mischievous inspiration of Wilkes, who relished these exercises of trivial spite. But the counsels of an important personage caused this step to be abandoned. Lord Chatham, who was sanctioning with his high authority these various attempts at harassing his Sovereign, now interfered, on the ground that the step would not profit their cause.

A deputation accordingly set out for the Palace, and another exciting scene followed.

After the Lord Mayor and some others had passed through Temple Bar, the gates were violently closed against Alderman Harley, who was highly obnoxious. The rabble pelted him with mud and stones, and then pulled him out of his chariot. He escaped from their fury with difficulty into a shop. On arriving at the Palace, the deputation was kept waiting some time, when at length the Lord Chamberlain came out with a paper in his hand, from which he read: 'As your lordship thought fit to speak to his Majesty after the answer to the remonstrance, I am to acquaint your lordship that as it was unusual, his Majesty desires that nothing of the kind may happen for the future.' The Lord Mayor demanded the paper for his own use, which was refused on various excuses.

An unseemly wrangle then followed between the City Fathers; Sir R. Ladbrooke had complained that he had been pelted with stones, on which the Lord Mayor confronted him with the City Marshal, who said 'It was not so.' The other said that dirt had been thrown at him; the Lord Mayor re-

plied, 'There was no dirt in the street to throw.' Sir Robert then accused the mob of 'spitting in at the windows of his coach,' to which the Lord Mayor was not so ready with a reply.

This was followed by another altercation in the Presence Chamber; when Mr. Rigby came up and attacked the Lord Mayor, telling him he had engaged to keep order in the streets, and that they were informed by Sir R. Ladbrooke 'that there had been a riot, which his lordship had taken no care to quell.' The other immediately replied that 'he should be ready to answer for his conduct at all times, in all places, and on every proper occasion. Townshend retorted on Mr. Rigby that Ladbrooke was a magistrate—'why didn't *he* keep order?' Mr. Rigby replied that a magistrate had been mobbed. Townshend said roughly, that, taking the whole case together, 'in his opinion, the people had been mobbed by the magistrates, and not the magistrates by the people.'

After this preparation, they were intro-

duced to the King, and discharged their function.*

In this exciting incident we do not find Wilkes conspicuous, but he was less prominently to contribute his share to the trouble. Thus, when the Recorder of London, Eyre, had declined to join those of the party who carried the remonstrance to the Court, he was marked out for future punishment. This display of petty malice was suggested

* It is almost amusing to follow the ingenuity of the devices with which the City contrived to harass the King and Ministers. Thus two men were to be executed within the City precincts—and the Recorder's sentence ran 'at the usual place of execution;' but in his warrant he put it that 'it was his Majesty's pleasure that the sentence should be executed at the most convenient place near Bethnal Green Church.' This variation Horne loudly clamoured against, declaring that those who carried out the sentence would be guilty of a murder. The Sheriffs eagerly took up the point and petitioned. It was openly said that this was another stretch of despotism, and that the object was to get up a riot in the district, and that the spot was selected close to the residence of the criminals, in order to annoy their friends and relatives. A respite was actually obtained, and the point submitted to the law officers. A sharp correspondence followed; but the matter was determined in favour of the Crown.

by Wilkes, who, in September, moved in the Council that, by this refusal, the Recorder had acted contrary to his oath and to the duties of his office. They could not dismiss him; but it was decided that 'he was unworthy of being employed in the law business of the Corporation,' and that he was to be no more advised with or 'retained' in City suits. Further, that these duties were to be transferred to Wilkes' friend, Serjeant Glynn! This seems a pitiful display. The glories of the patriotic Beckford were, however, to be but short-lived. Only a fortnight after his last display he was seized with a fever, brought on, it was said, by the excitement into which he had been thrown by his exertions, and died after a short illness. One of the members for the City, Barlow Trecothick, took his place for the balance of the mayoralty, and was said to have brought out by contrast the merits of the lamented Chief Magistrate.* This potentate

* Beckford had signalized his mayoralty by some magnificent hospitalities—notably by a banquet at which, as it was counted, six dukes, twenty-three earls, fourteen

was thrifty, and reserved in his hospitality, and did not wish to engage in violent conflict with King or Parliament. Wilkes, who now required everyone to be with him or against him *in omnibus*, held him up to public ridicule. Always ingenious in contriving situations which should bring about conflict between authority and the crowd, he was now anxious that when press warrants were sent to the City to be 'backed' by the authorities, all authorization should be refused, and was indignant when the new Lord Mayor declined to follow his advice. He arranged, however, that persons seized under the warrants should be brought before himself and other patriotic Aldermen, and then released them.*

---

barons, etc., were present. The guests went in procession to the Mansion House, and were so numerous that the feast was spread in every available room. It cost £10,000. Some extraordinary toasts were given, such as 'May the wicked be taken away from before the King, but his reign be established in righteousness.'

* When Trecothick's term had expired Wilkes wrote the following lively review of his term of office, which favourably displays his powers of ridicule:

'*Annals of the Mayoralty of the Right Hon. Barlow Trecothick, Esq.*

'While Guildhall still echoed with his name, his first act and speech was to arraign the conduct of that Livery in the most modest manner to their faces, for setting aside *Sir Henry Bankes.* He declared Sir Henry *a good sort of man*, although the Livery, by setting him aside, had, in effect, declared him *a bad sort of man* to be their chief magistrate. On the true *levelling* principle of his countrymen, the *Bostonians*, he likewise declared the late Mr. Beckford, that *first of men*, to whom the grateful citizens have decreed a statue for a long life of faithful services, only *a good sort of man.* He spoke little of himself, finding, I suppose, the subject remarkably barren; but in the conclusion, he seemed to allude to the error committed by the Livery in their choice of him *for so short a time*—an error which will not be repeated, I believe, even *for so short a time.*

'Sept. 18, all the calls of an expensive nature being over for the year, his lordship, from the greatness of his soul, invited to the Mansion House the *whole* Common Council, and provided an entertainment for *half* of them. Those who came first dined with his lordship, the rest with *Duke Humphrey*—not *Coates*—they wished that they had. Of the fragments were taken up and sent to the various prisons of this City, baskets 000,000,000.

'On Oct. 24, he admitted into the City whole bands of ruffians, under the name of *pressgangs*, caressed their chiefs, gave the sanction of his name and authority for all the constables, and let them loose against the laws, the peace, the liberties, and franchises of London.

'*God be praised, this day is Nov.* 8.'

CHAPTER VI.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

Wilkes, on his release, had to submit to the indignity of entering into recognisances for his good behaviour for the next seven years. His sureties were a vintner and a tailor. This obligation was not likely to inconvenience him. Indeed, long before the time expired he was to become an excellent orderly subject, likely enough to require other troublesome spirits to give bail for *their* good behaviour.

Delighted at his release, he had once more entered the world of pleasure and enjoyment from which he had been so long excluded. The friendly society that had paid his debts placed £1,000 in his hands; there was also the £4,000 damages recovered from Lord Halifax, a goodly portion of

which remained in his own keeping. The spendthrift rarely profits by unexpected release from his difficulties. We find him now launching out into expenses of all kinds, as though he had a fortune at his back. He kept French valets, with servants arrayed in gold-laced liveries. He was in treaty for several houses at once, engaging a town one at Prince's Court, close to Storey's Gate, and a villa at Fulham. He despatched his daughter to Paris, to see the fêtes for the Dauphin's wedding, while he himself set off on a pleasant junketing to the various watering-places, where he was treated with much distinction.

Miss Wilkes must have possessed attractive gifts of her own, for we find that she became a warm favourite of French ladies of the first rank, such as the Duchess de la Vallière, at whose house she was always welcome. Her fond father took care to fortify these friendships by judicious presents and souvenirs, and being a favourite himself, found it not difficult to extend his popularity to his child. With all the blemishes in his

character, his selfishness, love of pleasure and indulgence, there was one redeeming and engaging feature—his love for this daughter 'Polly.' In this he was ever constant, and it is proved, during a long course of years, by the affectionate series of letters, gay, playful, lively, and accommodated, as it were, to her disposition. Nothing could be more graceful than this side of Wilkes' nature thus displayed—his minute directions and careful provision made for her comfort and convenience when on her travels, his amiable collecting of news and gossip, his little presents and souvenirs, always conceived in a thoughtful spirit. This feeling was fully reciprocated by Miss 'Polly,' who writes to him in a strain of affection and respect, as if proud of her gifted and *recherché* father.*

When she was setting out, he wrote to her with anxious forethought as to her comforts,

* Wilkes had two illegitimate children, one of whom went by the name of 'W. Smith.' Another daughter, Harriet, was married to Serjeant Rough. Her mother was a Mrs. Arnold, for whom Wilkes maintained an establishment next door to Gore House, at Kensington.

telling her what he knew would interest her of all his own proceedings. He would write her graceful verses on her birthday, such as:

'Let *lovers* every charm admire,
The easy shape, the heavenly fire
That from those modest beaming eyes
The captive heart at once surprise.
A father's is another part;
I praise the virtues of the heart,
And wit so eloquent and free,
Attemper'd sweet with modesty.'

And again:

'The noblest gift you could receive,
The noblest gift to-day I'd give:
A father's heart I would bestow,
But that you stole it long ago.'

Or with a sort of pride amuse her with a sketch of himself engaged in his new civic duties:

'I am here, my dearest Polly, sitting in the seat of justice for the Lord Mayor, who has particular business at Westminster; but while I am waiting for the witnesses, I shall pay my compliments to you, although nothing has occurred of late to entertain you.' And he would conclude gaily: 'For fear of growing more dull than usual in this thick alder-

manic air, adieu, my dear daughter, adieu. . . . I have been only once at Vauxhall. I begin to recover the fatigue of visitings and great dinners, which I abominate. . . .* At Paris, I entreat you to deny yourself nothing, nor any pleasure: I can send you more cash.' In these confidential letters there were already signs of a reform in his behaviour: '. . . I go to Mrs. Cornelys' grand masquerade Monday sevennight; and have made me a blue silk domino, as masquerades are likely to be so much in fashion. Lord Chatham was great on Tuesday. I have not yet been to either House, *to avoid every pretence of a riot, or influencing their debates by a mob.* I mean to spend the Whitsun holidays at Bath, in order to dissipate a little, after having all this month despatched the necessary business. Good-night, dear Polly.' There are innumerable letters all in this gay strain, full of airy nothings, but always agreeable and affectionate.

* It can be seen from Horne's letters and Beloe's recollections that Wilkes had a sovereign contempt for his brother aldermen, and rarely spared his sneers at their dull, coarse intellects.

But one of his most charming effusions to this daughter, and which breathes affection in every line, was a little series of 'Orders' drawn up with an air of playful despotism, and showing the tenderest interest. This effusion is dated in 1778 :

'ORDERS

For our trusty and well-beloved Mary Wilkes, of Prince's Court, Westminster, Spinster.

'I. You are to pay the most particular attention to the health of our dear daughter, and if she returns home late in an evening, you are to take care that she be clothed very warm, and that both the glasses of the coach be kept up.

'II. You are to acquaint her, that we shall find a real pleasure in complying with all her wishes and desires for the city of Bath, whether they extend to any kind of bijoux, or are more limited to the other various kinds of produce of that place, for herself or her friends.

'III. Whereas we have received informa-

tion that several kinds of game are coming from France, for our great comfort, we authorize you to detain for your own use whatever quantity you judge proper, and of each sort, as likewise any French pie or pies, Marolles, Rochefort, or other cheeses.

'IV. Whereas we have at various and sundry times received the greatest entertainment from letters written by our said dear daughter, you are hereby required to declare to her, that the most pleasing things we can see till our return to our court, near the Park, will be her handwriting, and therefore you are to warn her to be frequent in so obliging an act towards us.

'V. Whereas heaven has been pleased to continue to my family a most valuable parent, of a considerable age, you are to give the satisfaction of knowing the state of health of a person who so deeply interests not only us, her near relatives, but all who know her; and this you are enjoined to do frequently.

'VI. Whereas this climate is charged with gross vapours, and at this season nature looks melancholy, and everything holds a most

dreary aspect, you are commanded in our absence to cultivate only the most cheerful company, and to assist frequently at those amusements *only*, which are calculated to inspire gay ideas, and to make yourself as happy as those will be who are with you.

'Given at our Castle on the brow of Speen Hill, this nineteenth day of December, 1778.

'PAPA WILKES.'

It is to the credit of his delicacy that when his illegitimate son, Smith, was growing up, a little fiction was devised by which he was to be called 'her cousin;' though it may be doubted if it wholly imposed upon her.

There was, however, one bond of union between them of a less romantic kind, which seemed almost as strong as any affection itself, and which developed in a rather grotesque way as years went on. Miss Wilkes knew that her father dearly loved good cheer, and devoted herself to ministering to this penchant by assiduous presents of game, fowl, etc., offerings which the gratified parent was

glad to reciprocate in kind. This led to hearty criticism or appreciation of the fare thus supplied, and thus they gradually seemed to develop into a pair of gourmands of the first water.

Nothing is more curious than this mixture of affection and good cheer, to which Charlotte and her 'bread and butter'—in 'Werther'—cannot be compared.

Thus:

'We had the Bath mutton: it was delicious. Likewise the Bath cheese, which we both liked extremely. . . . The chickens and rabbits have proved very good, and added to the *widow's* admiration and mine of the judgment in marketing of the donor, equal in poultry to what it is in *fish*. The member for Lynn has sent a very fine turkey with sausages. No notice has been taken to me of the French pie, or the note which attended it. One of the soles you favoured me with, I sent to my grandmamma. I will defer having the wine unpacked till Thursday, that I may attend to it as much as possible myself.'

'The venison was excellent.' 'I shall arrive with some Dorking fowls.' 'As Sunday interferes, I think it would be better not to *risk* any fish.' 'Walker has sent a fine haunch.' 'Last night came a basket from Calais, containing three hares, eight partridges, and four snipe. I immediately had all freshly-packed except a hare and a partridge,' which Miss Polly kept for herself. Then came 'two hares,' a present from an agreeable young gentleman.

Later is sent 'half a score of small delicate lobsters'—Colchester being 'famous for lobsters.'

'I thank you for your care,' he once wrote gratefully, '*about the French pie.*' 'I sent you yesterday some most delicate French mutton and a cheese, which, mark! must be kept four days after its arrival. I hope to send you to-morrow a basket of fine fish . . . I am glad you kept the Suffolk turkey, and hope it proved excellent. . . . I send you a country loaf of brown bread, as I think exquisite, made by a baker three miles from hence; you will find in the same basket a

brace of woodcocks, and some fish from Hancock. Woodcocks are here very scarce and dear, half-a-guinea a couple. These I think remarkably fine.'

Again, to the same tune :

'I am very glad you kept four partridges, and I wish you had likewise a hare and capon. The game has just arrived *in perfect condition.* Be so good as to order me giblet soup and pork griskins.'

Then we hear of 'some delicate country pork, fed with milk and pease only, and a leg of Welsh mutton.' He has sent in the same basket a sally-lunkin for her breakfast, and a brown loaf from the country, both of which are much esteemed. 'Brown bread is a bad supper, dear Polly ; suppose you add to it a woodcock.'

Then he sends 'the most beautiful haunch of venison which I ever beheld ; a great sacrifice for an alderman to make. I have not forgotten a little sacrifice of Newbury fish, when it has been peculiarly fine.'

And so the interchange of presents in kind went on for years, of game, fish, legs of

lamb, oysters, etc.—each batch being accompanied with succulent commendation. It is only a perusal of the letters that can give an idea of this gourmandism. Such is, indeed, 'apprehending one's friend in a present of game.' With advancing years and failing relish, this taste began to flag, and towards the end of life we do not find a single allusion to the once-loved topic in Wilkes' letters.

In a more pleasing key, however, is the agreeable chronicle which he writes to his Polly of all his gaieties and doings when absent from her. These letters fill some volumes, and are stored with good-humour, good-nature, and not a little *esprit*. He thus sends her notes of the characters and humours of Bath, where he was highly popular.

Wilkes was fond of paying visits to this pleasant watering-place of Bath, to the society of which he must have been a welcome addition. During the last twenty years of the century it was in its highest vogue, and the handsome city was as gay and

crowded as Homburg is now. About Christmas, 1777, Wilkes went to stay there, remaining until the end of April in the following year.

His letters to his daughter are written in good spirits, and full of all the humour and incidents of the place.

'Just arrived in this city,' he wrote on Sunday, Dec. 21, 'and to be seen without loss of time at the Bear, in Cheap Street, an *Alderman* of London, alive. He eats, drinks, digests, and sleeps as well as any Christian, and the last especially in a pew; but he does not always speak like a Christian: the more the pity: 'tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis, that 'tis true. He is thought by many good judges the greatest curiosity in this city—except himself.'

'I have been engaged,' he wrote on the Monday, 'my dearest Polly, the whole morning in paying visits to our old friends here, and unpacking. I made only a little excursion to the fish-market, and desire you to accept a very fine *piper*, and a pair of soles, which you know Bath boasts of. I should be

happy were it in my power to make the enclosed paper from the governor of the Bank equal to £45,000 at least. *Bon jour, ma très chère fille.*'

His sketches of the society and of himself are very lively. He says :

'I have not omitted a single morning taking the *beaume.* Dr. Wilson I visited twice, and sent him partridges. He raves about Kitty and America, and seems to have no other ideas ; he has kept house above a month from illness ; he is very obliging, but I have no invitation yet to dinner.

'Lord Kelly and Mr. Warre are to arrive to-day at five, and to dine with us at the Tuns. Tom Scott is come. My resolution is taken of never supping, and of going to bed at eleven ; I am yet not well.

'Bath is very full, but little good company. The ball on Monday was of 500 persons, but no female danced half so well as the little Grace of Prince's Court. At the ball of Dawson, the M.C., there were near 900 persons.

'I press the pillow regularly at ten or

eleven, and rise at seven, so that I am in high *odeur de regularité ici.* My apartments are very dull, but very warm and spacious. I question, however, if I should have liked any apartments here without the company of my dearest daughter.'

An incident that caused some scandal is next recorded :

'Dr. S——g [Schomburg ?], that *worthless* dog, *worth* £40,000, was detected on Christmas Day putting eight guineas in his coat-pocket, which he slily conveyed out of the plate, at the church-door, entrusted to his care. Yet the day after, several *soi-disant* gentlemen dined with him. I have not yet their names. He never returned home after the detection. His wife received a letter five days after, in which he only said she would never see him again.

'Both Christians and Jews in abundance desire their compliments to you. Lord Kelly among the first, then the Draxes, the Breretons, the Delacours, the Gideonites, etc., etc. There is a Miss Rian here, the most beautiful woman at Bath, just twenty-one, who pro-

posed yesterday that we should drink Miss Wilkes' health, standing up all of us.'

To entertain his daughter, he gives an amusing sketch of the troubles of an old Bath doctor, who had taken a fancy to him, and whom he appeared to be courting in a very assiduous way. This old man had fallen under the influence of Mrs. Macaulay, but the doctor at last revolted against her despotism. Mr. Wilkes, it must be said, was always eager after legacies, and was generally disappointed. He relished this squabble the more, as 'the celebrated female historian' was the sister of his late friend Sawbridge:

'Yesterday I dined, my dear Polly, at Alfred House, with the doctor and two other gentlemen. The doctor insisted on my being at his right hand, and told the company *that* should always be my place, that I should be his right hand, as I was in heart. He treated me with a kind distinction the whole day.' He describes the rage of the doctor at finding his sister and Dr. —— at breakfast, at Canterbury, 'in a matri-

monial way; that he seized —— by the collar, turned him downstairs, and told him that if he did not immediately return to London he would shoot him through the head, and added to Mrs. ——, that she was so abandoned a woman, Miss —— should not stay with her, and that he would take care of her; that, however, he had forgiven her at that time, but that at present he considered her as in the last degree infamous.'

The next scene was: 'A—— House is in great disorder. Mrs. ——'s woman is arrived, and the doctor, with the aid of a patriotic bookseller, is separating all his books from hers, and her clothes are looking out by the doctor's male servants. I postpone my visits till this scene is closed; but be it known *unto* you, that I am still first favourite. A—— House has been in as great a tumult, my dear Polly, as Prince's Court, and the neighbouring park, when a certain amiable young lady sneezes. However, as no violent storms last long, all is now again tranquil; and yesterday, notwithstanding the severity of the frost, the doctor took an airing of

three hours. Mrs. ——'s woman brought no letter to the doctor, but a written order for her mistress's clothes and books, which the doctor delivered. She has already left Bath with the clothes, without having been admitted to an audience, and the books are packed in four large boxes to be sent by the next waggon. Ten thousand particulars are now told of the female historian's insolence, capriciousness, and even abandonness.

'Lord Irnham tells everybody that he comes to Bath to see Wilkes, and so I engross him. Yesterday we went to Kitty M——'s, as she is still called, instead of the grave, dull, Mrs. Catharine, and, indeed, yesterday she looked as rotten as an old Catharine pear. Lord I—— was disgusted with her manner, etc. Darley has just published a new caricature of her and the doctor, which she owns has vexed her to the heart. It is worth your buying.'

He was certainly fêted and followed to an extraordinary extent, and seems to have made a most enjoyable progress. He was warranted in saying that he found going

about not a little troublesome, from the too great partiality of his countrymen.

The gay father also confided to his child in cynical style his true opinion of political men and parties. His favourable opinion of Pitt, and his bitter dislike of Fox, is shown in a curious way :

'Mr. Pitt is greatly improved as an orator. He has more smoothness and grace, more Attic laugh and easy irony, without the sharpness and gall of the last session. Mr. Fox's power declines hourly, and it is not supposed he will be the sitting Member for Westminster. Mr. Pitt said that he had foreseen that circumstance, and therefore took refuge on the hospitable shores of the Orkneys.'

This sketch of a dinner-party shows us why the company of Mr. Wilkes was so sought :

'I dined in Portland Place last Friday with Sir Francis and Lady Bassett, Lord Plymouth, four or five ladies, half a dozen Members of Parliament, and Captain Morris, whose nose a parson E—— pulled, and Lady

S—— married. He sang the "Baby and Nurse," an indecent attack on the King and Pitt, which he sang too, *as it is said*, at Carlton House. All the company turned to me at the conclusion of the song, and, after infinite plaudits to Bobadil, asked if I did not think it the wittiest song in the world. I did, except only one from the same author, called the "Coalition." Bobadil on this blushed for the first time, the company laughed, and forced him to sing the "Coalition," which is the bitterest satire on Fox and North, with really more fun than the other. I luckily recollected his singing it at the Horse Guards, when I dined last there. The tables were turned, and the "Coalition" laughed at all the evening.'

Wilkes does not seem to have been an admirer of the Prince of Wales. We might have thought that the Prince would have relished and sought his company. On one occasion he was much annoyed at the way he was treated at Carlton House.

'I went with D'Eon and his French friends, and some English ladies, by the

Prince's invitation, to see Carlton House. I was highly pleased; but none of the Prince's people had the attention to offer us fruit, or ices, or creams, or chocolate, although we were near four hours in the house and gardens. I was much struck and hurt at the omission of what would have been offered in almost every nobleman's and gentleman's house in the kingdom. The Prince was at home, but did not appear. D'Eon's friends will tell this in France not to our advantage. It is, however, chiefly the fault of Weltje.'

He later recounts the extraordinary incident of bailiffs being in Carlton House:

'Patrick Cawdron and his man were in possession, under an execution for £600. The possession continued for two days. The Prince stormed and swore, though, as the man owned, more from vexation than anger. Colonel L—— threatened to throw Cawdron's man out of the window. Cawdron said that he acted according to law, and the man should stay; the man was threatened ineffectually with having his bones broke,

etc., etc. At length a Mr. Jennings was sent for; and on the Prince and Mr. Jennings giving their honour that the money should be paid in three days, the man was withdrawn. The money is paid. The man courted the blows and the breaking his bones, declaring that then his fortune would be made, like the man in Molière. "A few more strokes, sir, for my large family; a few more, sir, for my dear wife, who is big with child." What a subject for caricature! What a lesson for the Prince! What vigour and energy in our laws! The Prince of Wales, Cawdron, Colonel L——, Jennings, and a bailiff's follower—what a noble group! Cawdron himself gave me the account.'

When the question of the Prince of Wales's marriage was rife, Wilkes heard this characteristic anecdote:

'The Bishop of B—— told *me* that a most respectable lady of his particular *friendship* said to the said B——, "The Prince came in here yesterday, overjoyed, saying, 'I never did better in anything; I behaved incomparably well. I should not have thought

it, as the case was quite new to me.' The lady answered, 'Your Royal Highness always behaves well. What was the case that was quite new to you?' The Prince replied, 'I was at a marriage, and gave the lady away.' The lady said, 'Was your Royal Highness never before at a marriage?' The Prince answered, laying his right hand with eagerness on his breast, 'Never, on my honour.'"'*

* It is something, too, to know the origin of an antique and oft-quoted piece of wit, with Wilkes' opinion thereon: 'The Conway lately married, looking out for a ready-furnished house, saw a pretty servant-maid, whom he asked, "if she was to be let too, as well as the house?" She answered, "No, sir, I am to be let alone." Whichever way you construe it, I never heard a truer piece of wit.'

CHAPTER VII.

WILKES *v.* HORNE.

Turning from this curious domestic picture to Wilkes' public life, we now find him of a sudden engaged in a discreditable quarrel or scuffle with his supposed friend Horne. This extraordinary business was to attract the attention and pitying contempt of the town. So inflamed were the pair that the Society was presently drawn into it, and Wilkes became at feud with all his chief friends and supporters.

The origin of the quarrel was this: Horne, whose dislike to Wilkes was growing uncontrollable, had noted with disgust Wilkes' new extravagance. It was, perhaps, more directly owing to the intrusion of Wilkes into the City—Horne's own ground, and which he was working for his own ends.

Wilkes, it must be said, 'smashed, pulverized, and utterly destroyed' those fair prospects, and literally drove Horne out of the City.

The malice of Horne in this dispute was shown in the most mischievous way. Complaining of the discourtesy with which he was treated during the Middlesex election by Wilkes's committee, he says to him :

'You had hitherto sat silent ; but being alarmed at my last words, which I threw out to alarm them, and to make them join with me in the risk, you followed me, and led me together with Mr. —— into another room ; you caught me by the hands, and supplicated me most earnestly not to be offended at such "creatures" as your committee. You swore I should run no hazard ; that you had more than money enough at your banker's, and would that moment give me a draft for *fifteen hundred pounds.*

'I replied—"Sir, I was not at all offended before, but I am now : I see you think me a dupe ; because it is Saturday evening, and your election comes on on Monday morning, you offer me a draft on your banker for *fifteen*

hundred pounds, when I know you have not *fifteen-pence* in the world."'

Wilkes denied the portion relating to the money, and produced as his witness the notorious Kenrick, whose testimony amounted to this, that Wilkes had too much sense to suppose he could persuade anyone that he had any money!

In another passage Horne says:

'Wilkes, with the education of a gentleman, has exceeded in meanness and want of sentiment his servant Curry. In the year 1767 I first knew some part of your private character, and no sooner knew than avoided you. Since that time, in the progress of my excessive industry to extricate you from your difficulties, I have to my astonishment found to be true not only all that has been alleged against you, but much more. However, were it possible to add to the measure of your private turpitude, it would not prevent me from acting over again in the same manner I have done.'*

* Another charge was that of getting Wildman, a tavern-keeper, to order and send over to him fifty bottles of the finest rum and arrack, three ladies' gowns, forty

It has been mentioned that the Society had not unreasonably required the £4,000 damages to be paid in to their fund, and were much dissatisfied at his excuses for retaining them, viz., that £2,000 was owing to his solicitor, who must be paid, while the balance was absorbed by his own necessities. He even claimed the £100 sent by admirers from Newcastle; which, however, to his disgust and anger, was refused him. Horne took a leading part in resisting these attempts. This helped to form two factions in the Society, which, though it professed but one Liberal school of politics, became, by this intrusion of the 'one-man' influence, divided into 'Wilkites' and 'anti-Wilkites.' It is interesting to find how this excessive devotion to a single arbitrary chief has invariably the effect of rending a party in twain.

Horne was at the head of the opposing faction, which included such staunch Liberals as Townshend, Sawbridge, and Oliver, who

---

yards of fine flannel, books of all kinds, etc. This confiding tradesman received promises of a draft on a bank for the goods, but could not recover anything.

wished to retain their independence, while helping Wilkes to a certain extent. But they revolted from the idea of being mere agents to collect moneys for his pleasure. A violent step of Wilkes' in November, taken against the Ministers, brought about an open rupture with the Society. A meeting had been summoned at Westminster Hall to denounce Lord North, at which Wilkes took the chair, and of which he gives this account:

'After I had mentioned the business of that particular day, I asked if any gentleman had a proposition to make. Mr. Connell rose and moved the instructions for the impeachment of Lord North. A Mr. More then, with a voice as loud as a speaking-trumpet, occasioned no small confusion by crying out with great passion, "What impeachment? what impeachment?" I desired him to approach the chair, which he did, and to inform himself and others more fully by reading aloud the paper put into my hand. Mr. Sawbridge then, in a manly and spirited way, opposed the instructions, and recommended a remonstrance. It appeared to me that the majority

of hands were for a remonstrance, which I accordingly declared to be the opinion of that meeting. After the business was finished, at the King's Arms, I declared there, "That I always should most cheerfully submit my opinion to the majority of my friends, but I feared the present remonstrance would have no more effect than the former, and be only another paper kite for his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales." I have, sir, a real pleasure in finding out, and following, the opinion of the people. I will through life be faithful to their cause. I firmly and sincerely believe the voice of the people to be the voice of God. I wish always to hear it clear and distinct.'

Horne sent to the papers an anonymous account of the business, accusing Wilkes of attempting to dictate to the members by giving them 'instructions.' Wilkes detected the writer, and, furious at the attack, sent to the papers a scurrilous reply under a feigned name, 'raking up' all Horne's life, accusing him of subscribing to the Society and never paying a shilling; of detaining several

amounts made for objects of charity; and of general dishonesty. Horne at once took the field in vindication of himself. Thus was this most foul controversy started. What galled Wilkes to the quick was that Horne had secured valuable testimonies of acquittal on the charges against him, from two friends and supporters of Wilkes, viz., Alderman Oliver and Serjeant Glynn.*

The quarrel seems to have rent the party from top to bottom, and we can hereafter trace from this incident the reason for Wilkes' animosity against the Townshends, Sawbridges, Olivers, *è tutti quanti.*

No fishwomen, indeed, could have been more coarse in their language. The parson

* 'I think,' wrote Oliver, 'it is my duty to declare that the charge brought against Mr. Horne, relating to the Society at the London Tavern, of which I am Treasurer, is false, scandalous, and groundless; and all the other charges, so far as I know or believe, are the same.'

'The charge against the Rev. Mr. Horne,' said Glynn, 'as far as it respects my election, is false and groundless; with regard to the other charges, my experience of the integrity and disinterestedness of Mr. Horne entitles him to my testimony, if his general character has not made it totally unnecessary.'

accused Wilkes of *pawning* his clothes, which he had left in his care; of defrauding tradesmen in London; of giving orders, and of pretending not to have received the goods; of giving an acquaintance a commission to purchase a pony, and not paying for it; of cheating his publishers. A more serious charge was that of appropriating or not accounting for certain trust-moneys belonging to a Foundling Hospital.*

When Horne declared that he knew 'several of the fraudulent pretences you had used since your release to obtain goods from tradesmen,' Wilkes answered, 'I know Mr. Horne to be *the father of falsehoods.*' And as to the clothes, 'I hope when you next wear red, it will be a suit of scarlet and gold cloth,

* His friend Almon's vindication of him in this transaction seems lame. Wilkes' own account of it to Almon was: 'The whole of the affair is this—he was to pay the tradesmen's bills at Aylesbury. The hospital issued the money; the tradesmen did not call for it every quarter; and it was left in Mr. Wilkes' hands. When Mr. Wilkes went abroad, all his private affairs were in the hands of Mr. Cotes; who was afterwards a bankrupt himself, and a great sufferer.' Poor Cotes! but much more than this was laid on his shoulders.

not of black, dyed red *with the blood of your countrymen.*' These personalities were continued for months, the terms increasing weekly in their grossness. Wilkes charged Horne with detaining moneys paid to him for other purposes, on which the parson replied: 'It is not my intention here to open any account with you on the score of private character: in that respect *the public have kindly passed an act of insolvency in your favour;* you have delivered up your all, and no man can fairly now make any demand.' To which Wilkes retorted: 'I believe, indeed, you will not choose *to open any account on the score of private character.* A gentleman in holy orders, the least moral, the least conscientious of men, whose life has passed in a constant, direct opposition to the purity and precepts of the Gospel, whose creed, from the first article in it to the last, is known to be *non credo*—such a person with wonderful prudence chooses *not to open any account on the score of private character.*' We may at least admire the vigour and compressed venom of these passages. Stung to

fury by this last sketch of his character, Horne now broke out: 'I maintain that Mr. Wilkes did commission Mr. Thomas Walpole to solicit for him a pension of *one thousand pounds* on the *Irish* establishment for *thirty years;* with which, and a pardon, he declared he would be satisfied: and that, notwithstanding his letter to Mr. Onslow, he did accept a *clandestine, precarious,* and *eleemosynary* pension from the Rockingham Administration, which they paid in proportion to, and out of, their salaries; and so entirely was it Ministerial, that as any of them went out of the Ministry, their names were scratched out of the list, and they contributed no longer.'

Wilkes, meantime, was acquiring a greater ascendency in the Society. Horne strained every nerve to oppose him. Wilkes, still eager for money, actually contrived in February, 1771, to alter the constitution of the Society, and it was now decreed that 'the *first* object of this Society, in order to promote the public purposes of its intentions, was to support *John Wilkes, Esq.,* against Ministerial opposition, *by discharging his debts and ren-*

dering him independent.' It was in vain that Horne struggled against him. He, however, contrived to steal a march on Wilkes, and in a comic and malicious fashion brought Wilkes' patriotism to the test. With this view, he pressed the case of another suffering patriot, one Bingley, who had been languishing in a dungeon for refusing to answer the 'interrogations' of 'the tyrannical Mansfield.' This poor man's case surely fell within the object of the Society? He had been three years in a gaol for the cause, had suffered far more than Wilkes—why should he not be assisted with cash? To bring the matter to this artful test, he proposed a subscription, and carried his resolution. But the effect was extraordinary. In a fury that any funds should be diverted from their natural course, which was to *him*, Wilkes now called another meeting, and he whipped up all his own faction in vast numbers.* Without

* It was nothing to him that this unfortunate Bingley had been actually prosecuted for publishing a number of his newspaper, the *North Briton*, No. 50, which was in aid of his own cause.

the least shame, he required the resolution to be passed, that 'No new subscriptions shall for the future be opened *for any other purpose whatever*, until the debts of John Wilkes, Esq., shall be fully discharged.' But he was not content with this. By some extraordinary chance there was always a balance of undischarged debts turning up. Thus in December, 1770, £743 was still found to be due, which could be easily disposed of and the account closed. This would not suit Wilkes, so on January 22nd, 1771, the Society met again. 'Great industry had been used by Mr. Wilkes to *pack* a majority; many meetings had been held, and dinners given at the Prime Minister's, his solicitor, Reynolds, for the purpose, and it was carried that the Society should use its exertions to paying all the outstanding debts of Mr. Wilkes.'

By this sort of hocus pocus, the Society was made to work as Wilkes pulled the strings—and by the time it at last came to close its labours, it had paid for him over twenty thousand pounds! Horne and his faction were thus totally worsted.

These arts, as we have seen, were alienating all the more manly and independent spirits, who saw, with shame, to what uses the patriot was turning the politics of their great City. It shocked these sturdy patriots to find the man who had joined their body but a few weeks, already busy with intrigues to secure, if not for himself, at least for his family, some of the best-paid functions in the City. This was striking an inharmonious note, and it jarred upon those who had associated something noble and self-denying with his name, to have to couple 'Wilkes and Liberty' with place-hunting. All through his course, and also at this moment, there hung on his skirts a coterie of henchmen of inferior ability but tried devotion, who had been useful to him in his many difficulties. These were the men who rallied to his side at the 'Society,' their only security for the loans they had advanced being his patronage.

Such followers did not prosper by the connection; for his company was likely to prejudice their business habits; and, indeed, we find that two attorneys, Reynolds and

Humphrey Cotes, were reduced to bankruptcy. Reynolds was the father of the buoyant, witty Frederick Reynolds, one of the liveliest and most entertaining of our dramatists. He was a pleasant, jovial being, who loved to be intimate with noblemen and great personages, and was fond of hospitality. He had all Wilkes' indifference to the condition of his private affairs, and rarely troubled himself as to whether they were prospering or the reverse.*

* His son has left this pleasant sketch of him, which itself is a good bit of comedy: 'He was a most amusing man during his whole life. Of all his pleasures, or relaxations, as he called them, not one was so injurious to him in his profession as his increasing partiality for his country place at Southbarrow. He would struggle against it, however, and, strong with the fleeting force of a new resolution, would often, in the evening, suddenly cry to me and Jack: "Come, boys, we must be stirring with the lark to-morrow morning—term is begun—business is in arrears—and, by all that is serious, we must make up for lost time." Accordingly the next morning, before six o'clock, off we would hastily start, half dressed, and, to gain still more time, gallop the whole way to town. After sending our horses to the stables, my father would call in the head clerk, who would stand before him with a melancholy countenance, talking of clients complaining of errors, others of losses, and others of broken

This careless being was exactly suited to be Wilkes' instrument, and he contrived to inspire him with devotion and admiration—a special art of the patriot's. Of the way in which Wilkes contrived to turn all his instruments to his own use and profit, the following is a characteristic specimen:

'My father and Wilkes,' says the son, 'on their way to Bath, paid an unexpected visit to my grandfather's sombre, sober mansion at Trowbridge. On the evening of their arrival, mobs paraded the street, particularly before the quiet old gentleman's door, demanding the illumination of his windows, and huzzaing for "Wilkes, Reynolds, 45, and Liberty!"

'My grandfather had gone to bed, and

---

appointments, till my father would interrupt him, crying, "Human nature cannot transact business on an empty stomach—tell the footman to bring the breakfast immediately!" After undergoing the exertion of eating two or three muffins, reading the newspaper, and giving a few vague professional hints to the clerk, he would say: "Come, my boys, I believe there is *nothing else* to be done." Then away we used to gallop back, as fast and as wise as we came.'

my aunt was on the point of following, when this uncommon scene occurred. My grandfather, on rising in the morning, found that the mob had not only made bonfires of his timber during the whole night, but that my father had staved his ale-barrels, and killed an ox and two sheep, preparatory to a grand public dinner to be given that day, on one of his best meadows, in honourable celebration of their arrival. The old gentleman was about to work himself into a furious passion, when Wilkes was introduced, and in a few hours, with his usual fascination, so completely won the favour of his host and hostess, that they immediately ranked themselves at the head of his admirers.

'On their departure, Wilkes told my father that he was extremely sorry they had put the old gentleman to so much expense: yet he would venture to say that the obligation was in some degree mutual, since he had had the gratification of rousing the owner of a country-house by bonfires, huzzaing, and public dinners, from the miserable monotony of seeing only hills and trees in the same

places, hearing the same noises from birds and beasts, and mixing in the company of those who are more interested by the death of a calf or the capture of a poacher than by the decease of a great statesman, or the conquest of a whole nation.'

This useful person took a leading part in the quarrel with Horne, giving dinners which he could ill afford to Wilkes' partisans in the 'Rights of Man' Society. On his release from prison Wilkes began to hold out to him hopes of securing for him one of the well-paid offices in the gift of the Corporation. Wilkes, however, could not wait to acquire a gradual ascendency in the City, but almost at once began greedily to see how to secure some of the rich prizes. He first thought of seizing on the lucrative post of Chamberlain for himself. Now this could only be obtained by violently dispossessing its actual occupant, who by established custom was re-elected each year as a matter of form. About the middle of the year 1770 he began his preparations by opening the plot to Horne, who

at the moment had much influence with the corporators.*

* Horne came down specially to Fulham, where, he declares, this conversation took place:

'*W.*: "I think I ought to consider something about providing for my friends, and being prepared with candidates for the City offices. Give me your opinion. Who do you think should be town-clerk?"

'*H.*: "Why, is Sir James Hodges dead?"

'*W.*: "No; but he is not very young, nor in very good health; and one ought to be prepared against accidents. There should always be a candidate fixed upon ready."

'*H.*: "Since you have asked my opinion about it, I will give it you very freely: I think directly the contrary. Consider your situation; your influence is not personal, but depends entirely upon the propriety of your measures. Though you may consider of the thing in your mind, you should never fix upon a candidate till the very time of election, nor talk about it to anyone."

'*W.*: "All this may do very well in theory; but Reynolds has done so much and is every day doing so much for me, that I think he ought to be fixed upon as town-clerk."

'*H.*: "In my opinion you have fixed upon the last man in the City that should be thought of for that office; and I may speak it the more freely, because Reynolds has experienced that I do not want an inclination to serve him. When he sent Mr. Tr——n to desire me to ask Mr. Sawbridge to appoint him his under-sheriff, he knows that there was not a minute between Tr——n's application to me and Mr. Sawbridge's granting my request; he knows, too, the steps I have since taken to serve him

Horne warned him that he would disgust his supporters 'if they saw him endeavouring to confine all the emoluments of the City to his attorneys, agents, and particular adherents.' This scheme, however, proved to be but an *ignis fatuus* for Reynolds, who expected to be appointed. Wilkes had another and more important plot on hand, which was to secure the post of City Chamberlain for his *family;* for he felt that the matter was scarcely sufficiently *ripe* to claim it for himself. He accordingly put forward his brother Heaton, and began canvassing for the post.

It had been agreed between the brothers that they were to share the emoluments. It is, however, but fair to say that Wilkes denied the truth of these imputations. Horne did all he could to frustrate the attempt,

---

in that line. There is nothing improper in his being under-sheriff, because that is a *private* favour granted by the *sheriff*, who serves the office at a very great expense. But the lucrative City offices are very different things; they ought always to be disposed of to the old citizens of long standing, not to those who make themselves free for the purpose; to men of respectable characters who can plead services to the city."'

and in his exposure of Wilkes completely proved his case. For Heaton Wilkes, in an address to the Livery, actually urged as grounds for his adoption, 'his near relationship to John Wilkes, Esquire,' and the fact that the Chamberlainship would enable him to assist 'the said John Wilkes, Esquire, more liberally.'

Justice has scarcely been done to Horne, as a mob politician and political writer. With all his violence he was generally in the right; and the best testimony to his sincerity is that he withdrew from active politics when he found that he was not likely to gain attention. In these City struggles it is plain that he was 'pulling the strings,' yet without any attempt to make himself conspicuous. In his appeals to the throne and the public there is an earnest ring, with a sarcastic, vigorous power, which excites admiration.*

* Sawbridge complained bitterly that, in the stirring year when he was sheriff, he found a secret cabal composed of Townshend (the under-sheriff), Beckford and Horne, which prepared all these exhibitions and never communicated anything until the moment of execution. *Note to Woodfall's 'Junius.'*

It was Horne who now contrived, with much art, to bring about the famous contest between the House of Commons and the printers, upon which we are now to enter.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOUSE AND THE PRINTERS.

Extraordinary as had been the spectacle of a Lord Mayor of London uttering veiled menaces to the King upon his throne, the public could scarcely have anticipated the incident of another Lord Mayor of London being taken through the streets to prison by order of the House of Commons! This act of violence was really no more than the sequel to Wilkes' old struggle, with only a change of performers. It would almost seem that that assembly had 'learnt nothing and forgotten nothing,' from their readiness to enter on a fresh contest of violence.

Though the formal publication of the debates was never countenanced, the public had always been regularly furnished with the speeches during the late crisis—mainly

through the instrumentality of the well-known Woodfall, who had the gift of taking away with him and reproducing with accuracy what he had listened to. The House had been much irritated by the angry comments on its proceedings made by newspapers. Old members, such as the venerable Onslow, deplored this abuse, and laid the violent feeling against the Commons to the account of this publicity. He declared that publication was 'a modern practice, completely unprecedented, and a violation of their privileges.' It should be said, however, that the comments of the newspapers on the members—particularly on Mr. Onslow—were exceedingly free and personal, coarse nicknames and descriptions being applied to them. An offensive description of a member of this family brought on the crisis, and Mr. George Onslow moved a number of resolutions forbidding 'the indignity,' as he styled it, of reporting their debates. This caused much alarm and indignation; and Horne, following his favourite tactics, proceeded to concoct an artful plot, by which

the question should be raised in a dramatic way. He set on two newspapers, the *Gazetteer* and the *Middlesex Journal*, to continue reporting as usual, promising them support and indemnity. As he calculated, the House, on February 8th, promptly summoned the printers, Thompson and Wheble, before them.* Four orders were issued, of which

* Portions of the order of the House were couched in an antique jargon, with certain abbreviations. It began '*Jovis* 21 *die February*,' and was signed 'J. Hatsell, Cl. Dom. Com.' This gave an opening for some happy persiflage—evidently from the coarse pen of Horne. It is worthy of the author of 'The Diversions of Purley:' 'I knew not that an Englishman is required to understand Latin, especially since the Act of Parliament that all process of the law shall be in English. If this order is not a process of law it can have no effect; and if it is, it ought to be in English. "J. Wheble" is a description of nobody; it might as well have been written "eye Wheble," or "nose Wheble," either of which would be as much the name of John Wheble as the former. "This House" (*i.e.*, the House of Commons) is more properly the house of John Wheble where the order was left than any other house—for there is no date or place. Mr. Wheble, therefore, best attended to this order by staying at home. The date of time being expressed in a foreign tongue, the day of attendance became uncertain—"Tuesday morning next" having no day on which it is next to follow.'

the printers took not the least notice. On one occasion the messenger was jeered at by his neighbours. The Serjeant-at-Arms was then ordered to take the delinquents into custody.

But the next step was an extraordinarily violent proceeding—viz., to ask the King to issue a proclamation offering a reward for their apprehension. This was classing these offenders with fugitives from justice — as persons whom the civil power was in search of. Yet they had committed no breach of the law. The King—behind the scenes, as it were—was, as usual, fomenting the quarrel; though he wrote to his Ministers enjoining caution. There was much cunning in the little device suggested as to the messenger, and the comfortable theory of putting the business under the care of the House of Lords:

'If you are of opinion,' he wrote to his Ministers, 'that any alderman will take the unjustifiable part you hinted at yesterday, why may not the messenger *be made to understand that on summoning them he could*

not find them? It is highly necessary that this strange and lawless method of publishing debates in the papers should be put a stop to; but is not the House of Lords, as a Court of Record, the best court to bring such miscreants before, as it can fine as well as imprison, and as the Lords have broader shoulders to support any odium that this salutary measure may occasion in the minds of the vulgar?'

Horne, meanwhile, was getting ready, and training the performers who were to take part in the piece. The plan was suggested by what had occurred in the case of press warrants — viz., to try and raise a conflict between the ordinary jurisdiction of the magistrates and that of the House. He arranged with various City functionaries to be in readiness, so that, on news of an arrest, both messenger and prisoners might be promptly seized and brought before them. But here the City factions and jealousies stood in the way. The 'Horneites' and 'Wilkites,' being at feud, could not agree on the methods to be used; and the printer, who

was obliged to be on his 'keeping' till the proper moment arrived, bitterly complained that his life was a burden to him, and that he had been shamefully treated by Horne and his friends. Alderman Townshend was accused of 'standing off,' and had prudently urged that the 'protection of some great man should be secured, otherwise it would be folly to act.' It was indeed a dangerous thing, after Wilkes' punishment, to enter into a contest with the House of Commons. Wilkes, too, was accused of hanging back.

At last Alderman Oliver and Wilkes himself were induced to undertake the duty. It was known also that the Lord Mayor, Brass Crosby, would support them.

All being prepared, the plan was carried out. On March 15th, one Carpenter, a printer, was engaged to denounce Wheble under the proclamation; and, a constable being at hand, Wheble was arrested and carried before a magistrate. Wilkes, by arrangement, was sitting at the Guildhall, and decided that it was an illegal arrest, and released him. He had a peculiar satisfaction

in addressing a report of the transaction to his old enemy, Lord Halifax, then Secretary of State.*

The Lord Mayor for that year, Brass Crosby, was a man of really intrepid spirit,

* 'Guildhall of London, March 15, 1771.

'My Lord,

'I had the honour of officiating this day as the sitting justice at Guildhall. John Wheble, the publisher of the *Middlesex Journal*, a freeman of London, was apprehended and brought before me by Edward Twine Carpenter, who appears to be neither a constable nor peace-officer of this city. I demanded of what crime Wheble was accused, and if oath had been made of his having committed any felony or breach of the peace, or if he lay under a suspicion strong enough to justify his apprehension or detention. Carpenter answered that he did not accuse Wheble of any crime, but had apprehended him merely in consequence of his Majesty's proclamation, for which he claimed the reward of £50. As I found that there was no legal cause of complaint against Wheble, I thought it clearly my duty to adjudge that he had been apprehended in the City illegally, in direct violation of the rights of an Englishman, and of the chartered privileges of a citizen of this Metropolis; and to discharge him. He then made a formal complaint of the assault upon him by Carpenter; I therefore bound him over to prosecute, in a recognisance of £40; and Carpenter to appear and answer the complaint at the next quarter-session.'

who, before this question, had gallantly defended the citizens from what was a monstrous encroachment on liberty. When the pressgang came into the City and seized on three men, he had the party brought before him, and released the prisoners, committing the lieutenant to prison.

Two days later, word was brought that another man had been seized, and was detained on board a ship in the river. He immediately sent and demanded him, and he was given up. By these and other bold steps he gained much popularity.*

But a more serious incident—which was to raise the real question—occurred on the same day. One Miller, another of the printers accused, was arrested by a King's messenger, under the Speaker's warrant. Resistance was made, and a struggle took place ; when a constable—purposely stationed close at hand by the Wilkites—instead of aiding the mes-

* He had married several times, and his later spirited behaviour gained him a bride of very large fortune, who, on his death, issued a large quarto volume, a record of his life and heroic behaviour at this crisis.

senger, as he expected, arrested both, and brought them to the Mansion House.

That evening, about six o'clock, an exciting scene occurred.

The Lord Mayor, Wilkes and Oliver were on the Bench, and were about to deal with the case, when the Deputy-Serjeant appeared, and, in the name of the Commons, demanded that the messenger should be released, and Miller handed over to his custody. The City Magistrates, with an antique spirit, positively declined to do so. Miller was discharged, and the messenger was held to have assaulted a citizen of London. An order was made out committing him to gaol, 'given under our hands, 15th day of May, 1771, Brass Crosby, Mayor, John Wilkes, Richard Oliver.'

On the request of the Serjeant-at-Arms, the Lord Mayor, 'with seeming reluctancy,' agreed to accept bail.

Even in this proceeding, which was all in the common interest, the spirit of the factions showed itself. Townshend, it will be seen, had no part in the business. But he openly

accused Wilkes of 'spoiling a well-concerted plot,' and of 'breaking in to obtain popularity.' No doubt both he and Horne wished that Wilkes should be kept 'outside.' The Lord Mayor desired to have the entire responsibility, and proposed to sign the warrant himself. But the Counsel requested that the others should join. Wilkes, however, was so far cautious of his safety that, at this crisis, he left his private residence and took lodgings in the City.

This cleverly arranged *coup* caused much consternation, for the House of Commons saw with an instinct of dread that what was really impending was nothing less than a renewal of their contest with Wilkes. This Horne's and Townshend's faction had foreseen, and hence their annoyance at Wilkes thrusting himself into the plot. Instead of being a quarrel between the City of London and the House of Commons, it would be the old stale squabble between Wilkes and the House. For the moment the situation was novel, original, and humiliating — the Commons of England and their officer

flouted by a City alderman! Their indignation was extreme; nor did they want the stimulant of support from the King, for *his* proclamation had been treated with the same indignity. He wrote to Lord North on March 17th:

'The authority of the House of Commons is totally annihilated if it is not in an exemplary manner supported to-morrow by instantly committing the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver to the Tower; as to Wilkes, he is below the notice of the House. I wish you would send to Lord Mansfield for his opinion as to the manner of enforcing the commitment, if these people should continue to disobey. You know very well I was adverse to meddling with the printers, but now there is no retracting; the honour of the Commons must be supported.'

The passage referring to Wilkes is amusing enough; and it actually proved to be the view the House also found itself constrained to adopt.

On the 18th the House was in a tumult of indignation, though Lord North prudently

inculcated moderation. Resolved: That the three magistrates should appear before them; the Lord Mayor and Oliver 'to attend in their places;' Wilkes (as it was carefully distinguished) to '*attend this House.*' It will be seen that this raised the point which the clever demagogue was certain to turn to profit. The King thought '*all was going admirably,*' and congratulated his Minister:

'Lord North,

'The conduct of the majority seems to have been of that firm and dignified kind which becomes those that are on the right ground. I am not surprised that the whole House—except Alderman Sawbridge, Alderman Oliver, and Sir Joseph Mawbey—joined in condemning the conduct of the Lord Mayor, and in asserting the privilege of the House, which, if not in an exemplary manner supported on this occasion, must annihilate the House of Commons. . . . Go on with resolution, and this affair will be happily concluded.'

He spoke with some alarm of the danger

of the Lord Mayor being rescued. As he considered him already consigned to the Tower, he asked : 'Might not the conducting him by water be the most private manner ?'

On the 25th, accordingly, the culprits repaired to the House, the Lord Mayor attended by what his enemies called a rabble.* As usual on such Wilkite occasions, Westminster was a scene of riot. Members were hooted, assaulted, etc. So completely were the approaches in possession of the mob, that the House had to send for the High Constable — who, however, protested that he could do nothing. Several justices arrived, who had more success. †

On their next meeting, Mr. Fox complained bitterly of the treatment he had met with—stones and mud being thrown at him, and the windows of his chariot broken, while he himself was roughly used. Lord North was also attacked and nearly killed.

* He was very ill indeed, and, it was noted, looked feeble and infirm.

† Gentlemen of influence, however, mixed with the mobs, and, by the use of soothing language and explanations, persuaded them to disperse.

When the House set to work on the business of the day, a scene of much excitement followed. The Lord Mayor justified his conduct on the ground of his oath, and by the charters of the great City he represented. But the Commons were in no mood to be trifled with.* The clerk of the Mansion House was ordered to bring his books, and was then compelled, on the spot, to erase the record of the proceeding. A resolution was passed to the effect that any action taken against their officers was an attempt against the privileges of the House.

All this, as Lord Chatham said, 'was the violence of a mob.' Some calmer and more moderate spirits protested, some even quitted the House; others deprecated the proceedings, and warned the members against the danger 'of getting into a conflict with the nation.' The Lord Mayor, as the discussion went on, begged to be allowed to go home, as he was seriously ill, which indulgence was granted

* It is amazing in these days to read how prompt and 'thorough' was the method of this assembly.

to him.* It was then suggested that his co-criminal, Alderman Oliver, could be dealt with on the spot. This patriot, called on for his defence, astonished the House by his calmly defiant tone. He said that he did not ask for witnesses, or the evidence to be read, and should not say anything. He owned and gloried in what he was accused of; anything he could say he knew would not alter the punishment they intended for him. For himself, he was perfectly unconcerned, and, as he expected but *little from their justice*, he *defied their power!*† No notice was taken of this vigorous protest. During the debates that followed, there was much warmth, and many threats even were uttered. Lord

* Later, it being reported that the Lord Mayor had been 'examined' in his bed by some members of the House, Wilkes delivered himself of a happy *mot*. He said 'they had held a bed of justice there to destroy the power of the Parliament.'

† It is always easy to recognise the true ring of patriotism. These City Fathers exhibited a stern yet modest purpose, with which, it must be said, Wilkes' tactics did not contrast favourably. Wilkes, however, never professed to have the spirit of the 'noble Roman,' nor of the Calais burgesses. He was only concerned about the interests of his one client—John Wilkes.

North, who had much of the *bonhomie* and good sense which was to distinguish Lord Palmerston, threw out broad hints that if a little submission or excuses were made, the matter could be arranged. But Oliver was inflexible. When it was proposed to give him into custody to the Serjeant-at-Arms, he refused that indulgence disdainfully, and demanded the same treatment as his friend. He was accordingly conducted to the Tower.

The imprisoned Lord Mayor was considered a martyr, and was visited in his prison by crowds. It is amusing to find Lord Rockingham and other distinguished Whigs cautiously debating whether they should commit themselves in this regard, on the ground that he was not suffering for any offence against the laws. He decided to go, as 'it would mark that the City and they were good friends.' With much flourishing it was announced that the Duke of Portland, Lord Fitzwilliam, and other men of rank, had called at the Tower. Wilkes did not miss the opportunity of exhibiting himself, and headed deputations to the Tower, where he

made speeches in praise of the prisoner. It was noticed that he tried to ignore Oliver.

But, it will be remembered, there was still the most important delinquent to be dealt with—no other than Alderman John Wilkes. While his friends were being arraigned before this Court, he had taken no notice whatever of the summons sent to him. Three times he was directed to appear, and three times he treated the notice with contempt. However unfavourable had been the result of his contests with the House, this exceptional treatment of himself — showing in an almost ludicrous way their terror of him—was most flattering. He had coolly gone to the Clerk of the Crown's office and demanded to have his writ, but this was refused, and he turned it ingeniously into a ground of complaint. On March 20th, after the order of the day had been read, commanding his attendance, and he made no appearance, his friend, Sir J. Mawbey, stood up to make an appeal. He had moved originally that Wilkes should be required to attend the House, on the ground that he was as guilty as the others,

if guilty any were ; and if they were criminal, he was a greater criminal still. Then he pulled out of his pocket a letter, which he tried to force on the Speaker, saying it had been given to him by a gentleman who had brought it from Mr. Wilkes. A rather absurd scene followed. The Speaker, seeing the collusion, refused to receive it, and complained to the House of the 'gross personal disrespect' to him, in its not being brought at the beginning of their meeting. 'I will not look at the contents,' he said excitedly ; 'it shall not be opened now. It is using me with disrespect.' Sir John Mawbey explained that he meant no offence, and tried in comical fashion to read out a copy of the letter, but was checked. A member said sarcastically that it was evident Wilkes 'was afraid that he was being forgotten by his friends the mob,' and suggested that, however undignified it might be, they should not gratify him by noticing him at all. On which, with much warmth, Mawbey broke out, declaring that 'he was at first, was still, and should continue to the last hour of his life to

be of opinion that Mr. Wilkes *ought to attend in his place.*' At this a perfect roar broke out. It was the real point. General Conway declared this was a violation of all decency.

Goaded into doing something which should save them from utter contempt, the House was obliged to order that Wilkes should attend. Again no notice was taken of the summons! A further order was issued for April 8th. As the day drew near, and it was known that he would not present himself, they shrank from this fresh mortification. It will hardly be credited how pusillanimous was their next step. They actually had recourse to the subterfuge of adjourning over the day, to April 9th, so as to avoid the conflict.

Wilkes must have chuckled over this tribute to his power, thus contriving to humiliate the House in return for all it had made him suffer. The King, too, had the same horror of him, and wrote to his Ministers: 'I will have nothing more to do with that devil Wilkes.'

Indeed, their conduct excited general derision. Some called it 'a pitiful evasion,' and

declared it was evidence of 'conscious guilt.' Wilkes, who might well boast of his victory, heard no more of the matter.

The others were detained prisoners—he went about free—until the end of the session. Thus ended this extraordinary episode, the most conspicuous of Wilkes' many triumphs.*

* Wilkes' letter to the Speaker of the House was as follows:

'Sir,

'I this morning received an order commanding my attendance this day in the House of Commons. I observe that no notice is taken of me, in your order, as a member of the House, and that I am not required to attend in my place. Both these circumstances, according to the settled form, ought to have been mentioned in my case; and I hold them absolutely indispensable.

'In the name of the freeholders of Middlesex, I again demand my seat in Parliament, having the honour of being freely chosen, by a very great majority, one of the representatives of the said county. I am ready to take the oaths prescribed by law, and to give in my qualification as knight of the shire.

'When I have been admitted to my seat, I will immediately give the House the most exact detail, which will necessarily comprehend a full justification of my conduct relative to the late illegal *proclamation*, equally injurious to the honour of the Crown and the rights of the subject, and likewise the whole business of the printers.

'I have acted entirely from a sense of duty to this

This was not all. Wilkes was enabled to secure yet further humiliation, and could boast at the conclusion of his mayoralty that he had 'intimidated the House of Commons.' Lord Lyttelton had heard of some language used by one Kendall, 'a citizen of London,' which was disrespectful to the House, which immediately ordered him to be taken into custody. The Usher of the Black Rod accordingly set out for the City to arrest the delinquent. But Wilkes answered that if the case were brought before him, he would certainly commit the Usher for a breach of the peace—and the latter thought it prudent to abandon his intention. It will thus be seen with what artful dramatic effect the issue was raised as between the House and 'a citizen of London;' the municipal officers acting in defence of this citizen as though it were the case of the burgesses in a Flemish city.

---

great City, whose franchises I am sworn to maintain, and to my country, whose noble constitution I reverence, and whose liberties, at the price of my blood, to the last moment of my life, I will defend and support.

'I am, sir,' etc.

CHAPTER IX.

JUNIUS.

Wilkes being now fairly drawn into the tangled politics of the City, and flushed with the honour of his victory, determined to secure for himself a more conspicuous position. The office of Sheriff, in which Townshend and Sawbridge had won such notoriety, was what he now sought. This new contention again shows what curious agencies were at work in the local politics of the time.

The Court was eager to secure the election of two staunch Conservatives, Plumbe and Kirkman, while Wilkes and Ball were the popular candidates. But once more the intriguing Horne was at his work. The return of either batch of candidates was unwelcome to him. In which view, he was accused of setting on foot an intrigue to bring

forward a fifth candidate in the person of Oliver, who would, from his high claims and recent conduct, divide the popular support, and thus 'let in' the Court candidate. The spirit of intrigue is shown by an account which Wilkes gave of a conversation with Oliver, who told Wilkes bluntly that he would not serve the office with him. Wilkes said :

'You say, "I am determined not to serve the office of Sheriff *with you*." The propriety of such a declaration does not strike me. I am ready to serve the office of Sheriff with you, sir, or any other gentleman given me by the Livery as a colleague, should they think proper to elect me. You add, "Because I really do not think from your own declarations that your political aims are similar to mine." My declarations have always been very explicit; my aims fair and honourable. I am satisfied that yours are no less upright.'

Oliver added that as his own and his brother's contribution to the payment of his (Wilkes') debts had been a full *tenth* of what had been subscribed, he really could not

afford to discharge Wilkes' outlay for the shrievalty as well as his own. This avowal, as Walpole heard, damaged Wilkes a good deal. It looked, indeed, as though he thought that money obligations could be most conveniently discharged by quarrelling with the lender.

No one was more interested in this contest than the King, who fancied that much—certainly his own comfort—turned upon it. He beguiled himself with the certainty of success. 'Lord North,' he wrote to his Minister, 'the two senior Aldermen appear now to have a fair prospect of succeeding. I trust no zeal will be wanting that their success may be as brilliant as possible, the more so as it will unveil what has certainly been all along the fact, that Wilkes has been in his various struggles supported *by a small though desperate part* of the Livery, whilst the sober and major part of that body have from fear kept aloof.'

This interference of the Court went far beyond expressed sympathies, and was revealed by an awkward, indecorous *contretemps.*

Alderman Nash was the partner of a Mr. Benjamin Smith, a loyal City merchant, to whom the Ministerial manager, the well-known 'Jack' Robinson, had despatched a missive, urging activity on the part of the friends of Government, and adding that 'Smith, Nash, and Co. must be on the alert.' Unluckily the messenger took this paper to another Benjamin Smith, of Budge Row, a Wilkite, who instantly published it, with an affidavit of its authenticity! As might be expected, Wilkes, with Ball, who was his creature, headed the poll, while Oliver, 'the opportunist,' was at the bottom.

Wilkes had thus advanced another stage on the road to civic honours. But mere office was not what he had in view. He looked forward to harassing the Court, to say nothing of the exquisite satisfaction of forcing his presence on the King. He had planned an ingenious scheme of annoyance, which should at the same time again raise the point of his exclusion from the House of Commons. In case an occasion should arise, the summons would have to be delivered to

him as Sheriff, which he would of course address to the person he considered the proper member. It was the fear of being concerned in such a transaction, and of being drawn into some fresh confusion, that made Oliver decline to join with him.

There was another power who had been deeply and perhaps unaccountably interested in the struggle between the City factions. He had been gradually won over—such was the unvarying fascination of the patriot—from being a contemptuous enemy, to be a warm admirer of Wilkes. This was no less a personage than Junius, who had been following the struggle for the Sheriff's office, and had all but identified himself with the Bill of Rights Society. He had seen, with infinite annoyance and disgust, the 'split' in the Liberal camp, and conceived a sort of hatred to the man who had been the cause of schism, with a corresponding regard for his opponent. In one of his letters, published at this time, he turned aside from his immediate topic, and fell with fury on the luckless Horne, declaring that he had been bought by the Govern-

ment, that he was actuated by a spirit of revenge against Wilkes, all mingled with great praise of the demagogue whose courage he extolled, and who he said ought to be supported '*so long as he was a thorn in the King's side.*' One might speculate as to what could have been Junius's reason for thus assailing Horne. The injustice of the attack was obvious; and it is generally admitted that Horne had the best of the controversy that followed, while in style and vigorous retort he showed himself even superior to his opponent.*

* This valuable and unexpected ai was not, however, supplied for the first time During the old contest on general warrants, Francis, then a young clerk in a Go ernment office, had written letters and pamphlets in Wilkes' favour, and the ardour and sincerity of this support is proved by the fact that he was also writing against his own superiors and patrons. One of these pamphlets, 'An Enquiry into the Doctrine of Libels, Warrants, etc.,' entailed a prosecution on his publisher Almon, and broke down through an odd mistake – the information being entitled 'The King against John Wilkes,' instead of 'against John Almon.' These proceedings, and the probability that he had to indemnify the publisher according to contract, may have inflamed Francis, or at least stimulated him to espouse the cause of Wilkes anew.

This praise of Wilkes, though guarded, must have gratified that patriot:

'Mr. Horne is well assured that I never was the champion of Mr. Wilkes. But though I am not obliged to answer for the firmness of his future adherence to the principles he professes, I have no reason to presume that he will hereafter disgrace them. Whenever Mr. Wilkes shall be convicted of soliciting a pension, an embassy, or a government, he must depart from that situation, and renounce that character, which he assumes at present, and which, in my opinion, entitle him to the support of the public. By the same act, and at the same moment, he will forfeit his power of mortifying the King.'

It is plain that 'Junius' had heard of, but did not credit, the stories that Wilkes had solicited place and pension—stories, as we have seen, perfectly true. But now Junius was more directly to join forces with Wilkes himself; yet one more instance of the good fortune that attended him through his chequered life.

On August 21, about noon, a chairman brought Wilkes a letter, under circumstances of mystery. He said he had received it from a gentleman, who put it in his hand in Leicester Court, near the Strand. To his pleasure and astonishment he found that it was from JUNIUS! The tone of this communication was most flattering. He meant Wilkes well, and if he were resolved to depend on public favour he might rely on Junius' assistance. The immediate purport of the letter was to secure Wilkes' interest for Sawbridge, who was candidate for the mayoralty. It was for Wilkes' interest, he said, that Sawbridge should be elected. 'Remember, public opinion of you rises every day.' He spoke of the insidious arts of Horne and the fury of Townshend, though Horne was now defeated and disarmed. 'He pressed Wilkes to unite with Sawbridge were it even for the rage that such a union would excite in Horne. He even complimented Wilkes on his daughter,' whose judgment 'I hear highly commended: would she think herself much indebted to her

favourite admirer if he forced a most disagreeable partner upon her for a long winter's night, because he could not dance with her himself?'*

Finally he suggests an interview with Sawbridge, who, he argues, will agree to 'a total renunciation of Horne'—and bids him show this letter about.

It is difficult to suggest a reason why Junius should have been so eager on this point of reconciling Sawbridge and Wilkes; or why he should be so eager to see the former Lord Mayor. These are points to which the diligent inquirers as to the authorship of Junius have scarcely applied themselves.

The correspondence which became at once so warm and cordial was continued for many weeks. Wilkes, with his usual independence, declined to desert Brass Crosby, who was proposed for a second term, but he gave some praise to Sawbridge: 'No man can

* One of Junius's most malevolent insinuations against Horne, was that he had been pressing his attentions on Miss Polly, and was in fact a rejected admirer.

honour Mr. Sawbridge more than I do for every public and private *virtue* which constitutes a *great* and amiable *character.*'

He also spoke of an intrigue he was maturing in this connection, and thus 'Junius would see the confidence I place in him. To make Crosby Mayor, it was necessary to return as alderman a man so obnoxious that it is impossible to elect him. Brigden, I take to be this man! While he presided in the City he was rude and scurrilous, starved them at the few entertainments he gave, and pocketed the City cash. But as he always voted right he was to be recommended, and the rest will be guessed.' This was not high morality.*

* The strongest proof of Francis being the author of the 'Junius Letters,' and which I think has not been pointed out, is a letter of his addressed to Major Baggs, dated July 26, 1771. To this gentleman he repeats all the details of the plot opened to Junius by Wilkes. 'The plan for the City is to have Crosby Mayor again, but the Livery must return two to the Court of Aldermen. Now the way is to return one Brigden with Crosby. N.B.—This Brigden is the most scurvy rascal in the City, and particularly odious to the aldermen.' He adds that 'Wilkes and Junius seem to make common cause. Poor Horne is drubbed till he screeches for mercy' (*Bedford*

Junius was more and more gratified with such confidences, entreating him to be careful of his health. He was flattered by Wilkes' partiality, and 'willingly accepted his friendship.'

He gave him warnings as to his carelessness in walking the streets.* Wilkes, on his side, declared that 'a line of applause from

---

Cor., iii.). This seems like the affected ignorance of one who really knew, and wished to 'pass off' as merely retailing the gossip of the town.

* The almost generally accepted theory that Francis was Junius, was attacked in an article of Mr. Hayward's preserved in his pleasant and varied collection of essays. But his objections are not serious ones, and most persons accept the Franciscan doctrine as 'the one that divides us the least.' We are grateful to him for the mode in which he disposes of one of Lord Macaulay's wholesale, or 'cock-sure,' as they might be called, assertions. 'It is very certain,' writes the historian, 'that very few English readers can have sympathized with Junius's abhorrence of the Luttrells. . . . My answer is that Philip Francis was born and passed the first ten years of his life within a walk of Luttrelstown.' 'Within a walk! It is within a long drive of seven miles—long beyond the Phœnix Park, and scarcely known to the inhabitants.' Francis, as Mr. Hayward points out, was only five or six years old when he left Ireland for ever, and at that age could not have imbibed much prejudice against the Luttrells, or against anybody, nor could he have taken walks of that length.

Junius gives the same fresh circulation to my spirits as a kiss from Chloe;' and added this odd offer, which was received complacently:

'Does Junius wish for any dinner or ball-tickets for himself or friends, or a favourite, or Junia? The day will be worth observation, whether *creta* or *carbone notandus*, I do not know, but the people, sir, the *people are in sight!* How happy should I be to see my Portia here dance a graceful minuet with Junius!' It was this pleasant gaiety that gained Wilkes so many friends.*

When Wilkes and Bull entered on their office as Sheriffs, it was attempted to attract notice by some spirited act. The presence of the military at executions had been resented in the previous year, and now, in a sort of proclamation, it was announced that they would not permit soldiers to attend: 'As that melancholy part of our office will commence in a few days, we take this opportunity of declaring that, as the constitution has

* When, later, Woodfall was issuing an edition of the 'Letters,' Junius directed that the Introduction should be submitted to Wilkes.

intrusted us with the power of the county, we will not suffer any part of the army to interfere or leave to attend, under pretence of aiding the civil magistrates.' This, they insisted, would lead to the abuse of standing armies, etc. Junius thought this 'protest very proper and well drawn.'

Meanwhile the enmity between the Wilkite faction and the Moderates continued to increase, and at a meeting of the Society, on March 12, a rupture took place—a preliminary to the final wrangle between Wilkes and Horne, in which the former directly charged Horne with falsehood, and conduct 'disgraceful to a clergyman and a man'; to which Horne retorted by moving that the Society be dissolved. This proposal was defeated by a narrow majority of two, on which Horne and his party seceded, and proceeded to form a new society. Alderman Townshend took a violent part in the proceedings; after which Horne became, as Junius says, virtually extinguished. The malicious publication by Wilkes of the damning letters, in which he lamented that he had allowed 'the

infectious hands of a bishop to be held over him,' cut him off from all chances of preferment; he, in fact, laid aside his gown, and withdrew to the country, to reappear later on the troubled scene, living on an annuity of £400, in part supplied by his friends Sawbridge and Townshend.

We have for some time lost sight of the man who had usurped Wilkes' place in the House, and who, as it proved, was rather an unlucky selection. The family was always breaking out into some extravagances that amused or scandalized the town; and in April, 1774, we find the Colonel declaring openly that he had been seduced by Bradshaw, the Government Agent, into opposing Wilkes, and hinting at revelations—a threat that was treated with contempt. On which he complained to the House that they had allowed the Sheriffs to summon Wilkes, to *his* prejudice and annoyance. That he had no cause of complaint was certain, as it was recollected that, at the time of his coming forward, the Duke of Grafton had vaunted the purity and disinterestedness of the young champion of loyalty.

THE ... Beaumont ... FOR EAST LOND...

The Court, however, began to take alarm, and the King wrote to Lord North, to suggest a device for keeping him quiet :

'Lord North,

'I omitted taking notice of Lord Bellamont's declaration that Lieutenant-Colonel Luttrell intends to come and resign his seat for Middlesex. I had heard a week ago a report of it, but thought it too absurd to give any credit to it. I do not yet see how he can effect it, *but would insinuate whether Lord Townshend might not receive a private intimation from you not to give him leave to quit his attendance in Ireland, which will at least postpone what might occasion some noise.*'

Later on, we find the whole family at feud. Lord Irnham, the father, had rather hastily resigned his Irish country house to his son. When he wished to resume his occupation, the graceless son refused to admit either him or the mother, and kept possession. The lady was so shocked that she fell into a state of melancholia. To make this story

more extraordinary, we find them a few years later actually leagued with Wilkes, who lent his aid to their intrigues. In April, 1778, they were filled with jealousy at the King's treatment of the Duchess of Gloucester, affecting to see in this an affront to their sister, the Duchess of Cumberland. They filled the papers with paragraphs, declaring that the King's recognition would affect the succession, and they succeeded in getting their old enemy, Wilkes—then restored to the House—to stand up and move for proofs of the two irregular royal marriages, 'to the disgust and indignation of the whole House,' which scouted the idea. They thus proved how little they cared for their sister's reputation.

Early in the year 1772 we find Wilkes busy with another intrigue in concert with Junius. This was an adroit and elaborate plot for bringing about a new conflict with the House of Lords.

A bitter libel was to be published on some conspicuous peer, which would lead to the arrest of the printers etc. The morning

after, the Sheriffs were to go to Newgate, examine the warrant, and then "take the prisoner by the hand" and conduct him out of the prison.

One of the Luttrells caught at the idea, and, on his own account, made a charge against the Admiralty of embezzling public moneys. As the notice or notoriety which he sought was not extended to him, he printed his charge, which was again ignored. He then set up a friend to call the attention of the House of Lords to this 'libel, and denounce the printer.' In vain the accused said they had to complain of no wrong or assault. The matter was pressed, and the printer summoned. On which Wilkes seized the opportunity to give out ostentatiously that he would commit the messenger if he was brought before him. But nothing came of it.

During his term of office Wilkes faithfully carried out his purpose of being 'a thorn in the side of the King,' and gained increasing favour with Junius.

On the anniversary of the Royal Ascen-

sion, when there was to be a thanksgiving service at St. Paul's, Wilkes proposed publishing a letter, declining to attend such a 'theatrical and hypocritical performance, considering the present disastrous state of affairs,' with which, he insinuated, this august event was connected. He was gently dissuaded from this course by Junius, who, in case of his persistence, drew up for him another form of letter. Wilkes, however, adopted his advice, and refrained from sending it.

Among his more laudable devices for attracting popularity, Wilkes gave directions that malefactors, when on their trial, should not be obliged to wear their chains. He also ordered that the courts should be thrown open without a fee—a regulation which had soon to be rescinded, owing to the confusion and disorders caused by the numbers that availed themselves of the new privilege.

CHAPTER X.

LORD MAYOR AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

When his term of office was coming to a close, the plans which he had been maturing for securing a more imposing office seemed ripe, and it was announced that our Alderman was to be the popular candidate for the mayoralty. By this time the enmity between him and Townshend had become most acute, and the two factions pursued each other with the utmost virulence. Townshend was a match for Wilkes in violence and coarse language, and had about the same indifference to decency or restraint.*

* This he had exhibited in the March of 1771, by a scandalous attack, in the House of Commons, on the Princess Dowager. He came from his bed, his face swathed, and looking ghastly. 'There was one aspiring woman,' he said, 'who, to the dishonour of the British name, was allowed to direct the operations of the despicable Ministers.' He asked would they wish him to

This contest for the greatest office of the City again excited all the activity of the Crown and Court. The loyalist candidate put forward was Townshend, who was disinclined to stand, and took no trouble about his candidature. It may be conceived what bitterness was imported into the struggle when the two rivals were openly pitted against each other. The King took the keenest interest in the contest, and had regular bulletins sent to him of the polling.*

---

name her? He did so boldly, and added that 'the greatness of the criminal's rank should not shield her.' More petty and undignified still was his refusal to pay his land-tax, in the following year, on the ground that the House of Commons was incomplete by the absence of Wilkes and by the presence of an intruder. He even allowed his goods to be seized, and in the action that followed made a foolish exhibition. The Counsel for the Crown simply produced the Act of Parliament imposing the tax, and Lord Mansfield, suppressing the 'patriotic' topics introduced by Serjeant Glynn, directed the jury to find for the Crown.

* 'Lord North,' he wrote, 'I trust by your account of this day's poll that there can be no doubt that it will end favourably; the mob being less quiet this day is a proof that from *riot*, not numbers, the *patriots* alone can draw support.'

'The unpromising appearance of this day's poll does

As the final selection rested with the aldermen, who were to select one of the two candidates highest on the poll, the Liberal party did all they could to prevent a loyalist being returned with Wilkes, as in that case the Aldermen would be certain to choose the loyalist; and the Wilkite faction were actually forced to give their second vote to Townshend, to their great annoyance.* But at the close of the poll Alderman Wilkes was found to be at the head, polling 2,301 votes. Townshend was only 23 votes behind him. A scrutiny was called for, which again raised the sanguine hopes of his Majesty:

'Lord North,—I hope the scrutiny will be conducted with great exactness, which, if it can be obtained when under the direction

---

not in the least surprise me, knowing that Wilkes is not bound by any ties, therefore would poll non-freemen rather than lose the election; if he is not one of the two returned he is lost for ever; but if he obtains that, though he may still lose that by a scrutiny, it will enable him to stand again the next year.'

* It is interesting to know that Oliver Goldsmith took part in this contest on the side of Townshend, and wrote paragraphs in the papers urging his election.

of such Sheriffs, I doubt not but Wilkes will not only not be returned, but that his little regard to true votes will come to light, which must do him great injury even among his admirers.'

These fair hopes were destined to be destroyed. The scrutiny was abandoned, and it was considered certain that Townshend's friends would withdraw his claims. But here a man whom Wilkes had turned into an enemy was to play him a *mauvais tour*, the choice between the two candidates resting with the Aldermen. This was Oliver, who, determined not to allow Wilkes to be returned, hastily collected a Court of Aldermen, and before the Wilkites could collect their faction, had declared Townshend elected !

Wilkes was at first thunderstruck by disappointment. Then his rage and that of his partisans broke out into every kind of outrage against his successful rival. These exceeded all bounds of decency. When the new Lord Mayor gave the usual ball, a Wilkite mob surrounded the Guildhall and

attacked the guests. Townshend, always ready for battle, prepared to sally out and do battle with the mob. A number of persons were arrested and committed by him to Newgate, for which Wilkes denounced him publicly, accusing him of wishing to destroy the prisoners by purposely consigning them to a prison where the gaol fever was raging! Horne was set upon by the mob, and severely handled.

Townshend, infuriated by these gross outrages, declared that he would bring the riot home to Wilkes.

Wilkes challenged him to prove his charges. It was thought that Townshend rather shuffled out of his reply, 'and he was driven out with hisses.' Between him and Wilkes some recrimination—such as giving the lie, etc., followed. But the crowning effrontery was when Wilkes accused him of making a scurrilous attack on the Princess Dowager!

During the proceedings, Alderman Nash was grievously insulted and almost killed. Townshend and Sawbridge assailed Wilkes,

accusing him of 'inserting lying, anonymous paragraphs against them in the papers.'

This defeat was the more bitterly felt, as Wilkes was now once more beginning to suffer from pecuniary straits. He was still going on excursions, pleasant accounts of which will be found in his letters to his 'Polly.' But he now contrived an elaborate and ingenious mode of annoyance for the personage who had helped to defeat him. The history of this transaction is amusing from the malice it exhibited. He contrived to assail the King once more with one of the eternal 'Remonstrances'—the name of which must have become odious to his Majesty—and drew up one in the most offensive terms he could devise. The King was told that they desired to approach the throne with the respect becoming a free people zealously attached to the laws and constitution of this country, *and true Parliamentary right of your Majesty to the Crown of these realms.* They complained with humility that the injuries received from Ministers were unredressed; they dwelt upon their 'atrocious

violations of the laws, committed with a daring contempt of every principle, human and divine.' Former petitions were received with a neglect and disregard very hardly brooked by the high spirit of a great and powerful nation. They now again appealed to him to listen to the voice of his aggrieved subjects in vindication of his own and the nation's honour, '*against your despotic and corrupt Ministers.*' Then, after enumerating the stock grievances: general warrants, and imprisonment of Lord Mayor, etc., 'they recalled to his remembrance with horror the unparalleled act of tyranny, the erasing of a judicial record in order to stop the course of justice. They therefore begged for the dissolution of the present Parliament.'

Wilkes openly gave out that he had purposely used this offensive language to destroy Townshend. For, as he boasted, if the latter brought it to St. James's, 'he would be undone,' and, if he refused, 'he would be stoned.' With an amusing cynicism, he himself declined to attend, giving these reasons:

'As I have long been personally obnoxious

to the King, I have not for many years been at St. James's. It would now be rude and indecent to force myself into the royal presence on an occasion not the most pleasing, I believe, to his Majesty. *I am not used to* go into any gentleman's house who does not wish to see me. . . . I am now to be considered only as an Alderman. The attendance of the whole body is not necessary. No favourable effects could arise from my being with you at St. James's; and if the least disturbance should happen without, it would be construed to be a premeditated riot; the guards would immediately be ordered to fire among the people, and another massacre ensue.

'I am not fond of the air of a Court: it generally blasts sooner or later, and often nips even in the bud our modern patriotism. I should be particularly unhappy at this time to see my Sovereign surrounded by, and the royal smiles beaming on, those very Ministers against whom the City of London now petitions and remonstrates.'

Some advised that the King should de-

cline to receive this screed of insolence. What his Majesty thought of it will be seen from his consultations with Lord North, to whom he wrote from the Queen's House, 'March 13th, 38 min. pt. 8 p.m.' :

'The remonstrance, according to the copy you have transmitted to me this day, has undoubtedly the marks of being the most violent, insolent, and licentious ever presented ; a dry answer, rather bordering on contempt than anger, may not be improper. I cannot help suspecting that Mr. Oliver has been advised to be ill, which delays the bringing this flagrant piece of impertinence, whilst the Lord Mayor consults what part he will take.'

The answer was certainly more than 'dry.' Indeed, it may be doubted if, since the days of Charles I., an English Sovereign had replied with such severity to an address.

'I have the satisfaction,' ran this stern rebuke, 'to think that my people do not doubt my readiness to attend to their complaints, or of my ardent desire to promote

their happiness, which I cannot more effectually do than by resisting every attempt to sow groundless jealousies among them.

'Your petition is so void of foundation, and *is, besides, conceived in such disrespectful* terms, that I am convinced you do not seriously imagine it can be complied with.'

Wilkes, though thus engrossed in City broils, took care to remind the House of Commons that he was still among them. It has been said, indeed, by many writers, that he had long before this dropped out of the public mind, and had even 'sunk into contempt.' But a proof of his vitality is furnished by the terror which the House showed of entering into conflict or connection with him. A chance, singularly favourable, which presented itself, in the year 1773, had all but once more raised the whole question of Wilkes's Parliamentary position in serious shape. It was found necessary to direct 'a call of the whole House,' in reference to a dispute with France, and the Speaker despatched the customary notices to the Sheriffs, which they were to forward

to the Members. It will be seen what an opportunity arose here. The Sheriffs at once sent the summons to Wilkes, as the sitting Member, and formally notified this step to the Speaker; while Wilkes acknowledged the reception of the writ to the same functionary, engaging to obey the call at once.

When the House met, the Speaker announced the receipt of these letters, and asked whether he should read them out. But the order of the day was hastily voted, as the only way of extrication. The House was literally in terror of the question. As Mr. Burke said later, 'The climate of the House was changed, so soon as the name of Wilkes was mentioned; the doors were barred, and strangers were refused admittance.' But Wilkes was not to be thus baffled. He demanded his writ from the Crown Office, which was refused him; on which he marched down to Westminster at the head of a mob. There was much alarm. The guards were held ready. His friend Glynn moved that Wilkes should be heard at the Bar. Great exertions, however, were made,

and the House contrived to put the whole question aside. Still, he had the satisfaction of showing with what dread he was regarded, all which must have been infinitely welcome to his private feelings.

He found indemnification in a new scheme for the annoyance of the Court. It had been announced that the Duchess of Gloucester was about to be confined. The King had been much distressed by family differences arising out of her marriage, and its recognition ; and it was altogether a painful subject. Wilkes now delicately suggested to the City to prepare an address of congratulation to his Majesty on the event. But this was thought too indecent by the Corporation, and it was put aside.

At last, in the year 1774, the chequered career of this fortunate adventurer reached it climax. The Middlesex Election—an old story now—was laid to rest, though his friend, Sir George Saville, had brought it on every year in a harmless and formal way. A dissolution occurring, he was once more elected to be Member of Parliament for

his old seat of Middlesex, and was allowed to take his seat without the least opposition. At the same election, which took place in December, he, Sawbridge, his brother-in-law Hayley, and Oliver, were all returned, each by nearly 4,000 votes. No one, indeed, could now object to his taking his seat; for the resolution expelling him expired with the last Parliament. This was a wonderful and victorious close to the long, though unnecessary, struggle that had raged so long. As may be imagined, the new Members saw nothing dangerous in his company, and wondered that so pleasant a being should have been associated with such disorders. His first speech must have been awaited with curiosity, and perhaps left a disquieting impression that the old Wilkes was among them, ready to foment turmoil and confusion. It was 'King Charles the Martyr's day,' and he stood up to protest against any recognition of this antiquated festival. 'He was not,' he said, 'for deprecating the pretended wrath of Heaven by fasting and prayer.' The day should be celebrated as a day of

triumph, and they should rather hold that the death of Charles — 'an odious hypocritical tyrant'—was 'highly approved by Heaven!' This was in the old vein.

Later—though not in obedience to his profane protest—this, with other surviving 'curiosities,' was abolished. But this was merely a flickering of the old intemperate spirit. He began soon to exhibit an almost cynical contempt for consistency, and displayed his genuine opinion of the many-headed mob, to whom he owed so much. He almost seemed anxious to have it understood that he had used this instrument for his purposes, and could now laugh at its simplicity.

Once, when talking to the Speaker, he mentioned carelessly that he had a petition to present 'from a pack of the greatest scoundrels upon the face of the earth.' The Speaker was amused to hear him later begin his address: 'Sir, I hold in my hand a petition from a most intelligent, independent, and enlightened body of men,' etc.

In the same reckless spirit, he gave some advice to Major Scott, who was to be repri-

manded by the Speaker. 'I give you joy,' he said. 'I am glad to see you in full dress.' And he then counselled him, so soon as the Speaker had concluded his reprimand, 'to abuse them all confoundedly,' for which he would 'assuredly be sent to Newgate, or perhaps to the Tower; and *then* you may be Member for Middlesex or Westminster.' This was in the same key as his advice to 'Jack Lee,' as reported by Boswell: 'Be as impudent as you can.'

This airy insincerity, however, sometimes led him into an awkward position. Mr. Swinburne, the traveller, repeats a droll scene which occurred at Wilkes's own table when he was entertaining Barthelemy, Rewitsky, and some others:

'At the dessert, somebody happened to mention Lord Sandwich, when Rewitsky started up, saying, "Is it the famous Lord Sandwich, who had his friend condemned by the House of Lords to be hanged for writing an abominable book?"

'Wilkes stared, and hung his jaw and tongue, as was usual with him in any

dilemma, but said nothing. Barthelemy, who knew nothing of the matter, pressed Rewitsky to give an account of it. "It was a horrible work," said he, "as I am told, for I never read it; it certainly deserved that its author should be punished, for he must have been void of all religion, shame, and decency; I am surprised Lord Sandwich let him live so long." Soon after, without anything more being said on the subject, the conversation changed, and perhaps Rewitsky will never know that it was his *Amphytrion du jour* whom he had been thus reprobating to his face.'

One would have thought that Wilkes's tact and knowledge of the world would have extricated him; but no doubt he felt a shock —shame, perhaps—that his old humiliation was still remembered.

Lord Brougham, who conversed with many who remembered Wilkes, treats him with almost bitter contempt, and allows him no character whatever. 'His appearance,' he says, 'was so revolting as to be hardly human'—an exaggeration not consistent with

the general testimony. If an ugly man, Wilkes could, as he said, talk away his face, and be only a quarter behind the handsomest man. Lord Brougham adds that he 'drove a trade,' and only gives him credit for a complete absence of hypocrisy.

With this restoration of honours was to come a further triumph. A few weeks later the ever-fortunate Wilkes was elected Lord Mayor of London, again in spite of the King and Court faction, though closely pressed by his friend Bull.* He was delighted at this elevation, which, however, he intended should be the stepping-stone to further civic honours. Yet he was a comparative stranger to the City, and had no connection with its trade or business.†

* The votes were: for Wilkes, 1957; for Bull, 1923.

† Colonel Onslow happily ridiculed this new system of importing political adventurers. The City, he said, 'had gone to the West End of the town, and other parts of the kingdom, to find Patriots qualified to preside over them as magistrates, and represent them in the City senate. Instead of the fat, inactive, commercial Aldermen, they have chosen Patriots, as Shakespeare says, not "sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights." They have discarded the fat, sleek, well-carcased black

Wilkes' mayoralty was a notable one, and gave much satisfaction to the general public. When it was notified to him that the Chancellor was to inform him that 'his Majesty did not approve of the City's choice,' he replied smartly that 'I am as fit to be Lord Mayor as he to be Lord Chancellor.'

From his old friend D'Holbach he received this handsome letter of congratulation :

'My Lord,

'I received with the utmost gratitude your lordship's friendly letter of the 28th of March. I should have done myself the honour of answering sooner to your kind propositions, if I had not been prevented by some gouty infirmities that have assailed me in the beginning of the spring. I esteem myself very happy to find that the hurry of business, and your exaltation to the rank of

---

dock-tails, and have substituted the long-tailed, patriotic Aldermen, animals which champ the bit, and prance and curvet ; but I doubt whether these blood bays will draw so well as the old nags.'

chief magistrate, could not make you forget your friendship to me. Though my present circumstances do not permit me to make use of your friendly invitation, be persuaded, my very dear lord, that Madame D'Holbach and myself shall for ever keep these signs of your kindness in very grateful remembrance. We both desire our best compliments to your very amiable Lady Mayoress, who acted so well her part lately in the Egyptian Hall, to the satisfaction of that prodigious crowd you have been entertaining there. All members of our society that have had the happiness of being acquainted with you desire to be kindly remembered; and a continuation of your valuable friendship shall for ever be my utmost ambition.'*

* As a proof that the new Lord Mayor excelled the philosopher in *esprit*, and could hold his own with the French wits, I must quote here a letter which he wrote some years before from Paris, addressed to Garrick on executing a commission intrusted to him by Helvetius. This agreeable composition will be read with pleasure. After announcing a 'pacquet from our amiable friend Helvetius,' 'he desires me in the warmest terms to recommend to you a *tragedy* of one of his friends, an Irishman, who is here. I have no acquaintance with the

Miss Polly Wilkes, as Lady Mayoress, was much admired for the grace and pro-

---

playwright, but Helvetius has dragged me through the piece, and insists on my saying the handsomest things of it to you. I have great power of face, and therefore only found the tragedy too didactic, and lamented the author's not sufficiently knowing the English stage. I admired the sentiments, and recommended the form of a philosophical epistle to Helvetius, rather than this of a tragedy. In vain; I must send it to you: I obey, and wish you a good deliverance from this new Irish attack on our stage.

'As I could not save you, you will save yourself by a letter to Helvetius, and he will subscribe, I am sure, to the opinion of the best judge of literature, as well as one of our best authors. We regret your absence greatly at Pelletier's, and send many warm wishes after you. We have made an agreeable acquisition in Monsieur de Bussy, who is always amiable and good-humoured here, though I believe he was peevish enough among our countrymen. I love a Frenchman *d'un certain age*, when he is retired from business with a good pension and a good cook. Helvetius is now often of that set. Did you know his own mother, whom he loved tenderly, and was a woman of superior merit? She is just dead, and he is this morning in great affliction. Yesterday I had a letter from him, the beginning of which will please you, *Mon cher précepteur des Rois, vous qui avez de si mauvais écoliers qui êtes exilé dans ce monde, qui serez damné dans l'autre, et à qui la posterité doit une statue, etc.*

'I keep a steady and a longing eye on dear England, but I do not know when I am likely to see its white cliffs

priety with which she acquitted herself. A magnificent ball was given on April 8th, which excited much attention—my Lord Mayor opening it with the Duchess of Leinster, and Miss Wilkes being led out by Lord Mahon. Prince Pallavicini and other distinguished persons were among the guests. Here also was Mr. Boswell, figuring as Wilkes' friend, and getting good places at the chief table for himself and Colman. 'See what it is,' he cried, 'to have a Scotch-

---

again. Perhaps I may be doomed, like all my predecessors in Plutarch, to pass the rest of my life in exile: so dangerous is it to do great services to any country. If that should be the case, I will alleviate the evil by philosophy, by the amiable philosophers you know this country produces, by a good conscience, and the *superbiam*. I believe you will let me say *quæsitam meritis*. My place of banishment, at least, is left me, and the pursuit of those studies, which in every place and every age are the duty and ornament of life. I am less dissipated than ever here, and my *history*, etc., advances very fast.

'I hear that you are collecting your works for publication. I rejoice at it. Do not be content with charming the present age, but command posterity to admire you, and give me the happiness of reading, when I cannot have that of seeing you.

'I will come to my native London as soon as ever I have leave, and to you.'

man for your friend at Mr. Wilkes' table!' Colman, hearing him speaking German to a waiter—there were German waiters even then—said sarcastically that they must have come by mistake to St. James's Palace, 'for here are none but Germans and Scots.'*

As a rather childish display of patriotism, Wilkes gave out that he would have no French wines at his table. Some years before he had tried to extort a pledge from the in-coming Lord Mayor Nash that he would not give French wine to his guests. The other replied bluntly that Wilkes might

* Colman addressed some pleasant complimentary verses to Miss Polly Wilkes, on her manner of acquitting herself on this occasion:

'The Lady May'ress, first of maids,
Admired by sages, cits, and blades,
Is such a *rara avis*,
That could you hear an angel speak,
No more you'd rhyme to Kitty's cheek,
Or toast fair Polly Davis.

'She's all politeness, ease and wit,
Admired by courtiers and by cit,
And ev'ry girl surpasses.
In filial piety she leads—
She beats the Roman, Grecian deeds,
Nay, tops the Pindus lasses.'

give what wines he pleased without interference; but that 'it pleased him to drink French wines and to put them on his table; and he should continue to do so.'

His mayoralty was, on the whole, uneventful. The 'patriotic' Lord Mayor could not resist the temptation of 'getting up' yet another of those 'remonstrances' which were the terror of the King. In April the poor monarch read in the newspapers that something of the kind was being prepared in reference to the American revolt. He wrote:

'A meeting where the business was proposed by Captain Allen cannot be very respectable, nor deserve more civility than the one which fabricated a like production the last year; I am clear, therefore, no answer ought to be returned to it. I should think Monday the best day for receiving this ridiculous though insolent production.'

He talked the matter over with Lord North. How was he to avoid 'receiving this new dish of insolence from the shop that has fabricated so many, and prevent myself sitting in future to see myself insulted?'

But there was no course open but to receive the deputation and the hated Wilkes. The latter, on his arrival, was informed by the Chamberlain that 'his Majesty expected his lordship should not speak to him.' On which Wilkes promptly replied 'that he neither expected nor desired that honour.' This furnished him with an opportunity for a long but rather temperate reply to Lord Hertford, published in all the newspapers.

The purport of the petition was to beg of the King to dismiss his Ministers, who wished to establish arbitrary power over America. He answered, 'It is with the utmost astonishment that I find any of my subjects capable of encouraging the rebellious disposition which unhappily exists in some of my colonies;' and by a letter from the Lord Chamberlain he announced his purpose never again to receive on the throne any address from the Lord Mayor and Aldermen but in their corporate capacity.

Walpole tells us that at the audience a circumstance truly significant was noted. Instead of the rough, insolent Wilkes, there was seen

a courteous and moderate functionary, conducting himself with extraordinary decorum; so that the King himself in his surprise declared that 'he had never seen so well-bred a Lord Mayor.' Another converted enemy of his, Lord Mansfield, declared later 'that Mr. Wilkes was the most perfect gentleman he had ever seen.'

Not content with his high position, or with his restoration to the House, Wilkes had determined on what was to be the most daringly successful of all his public deeds. This was nothing less than to compel the existing House of Commons to atone for all the acts of its predecessor, and enforce it to eat the humblest of humble pie. This seemed a hopeless, impossible task, when we consider how disinclined such a body as the House of Commons is to disturb or meddle with what is past. The book is, as it were, closed. But Wilkes, with extraordinary perseverance, brought the question forward year after year. First in February, 1775, when he urged his case with studious moderation, and was actively supported by one of the Luttrell

family, who expressed his 'detestation of all the illegal proceedings connected with the election.' When Colonel Luttrell 'undertook this Ministerial job, he expected to have the votes of the majority, but he had been made the victim of a faction.' Wilkes on this occasion had 171 votes, and was only defeated by 68.

In April, 1776, he renewed his motion, securing 92 votes: but he was opposed by 182. In February, 1779, he increased his supporters by 122. In 1781 his cause rather went back a little, and did not seem so hopeful. But it was not until a favourable Ministerial change came about, and the Rockingham party were in power, that he was able to carry out his scheme. In May, 1782, he made his appeal for the last time, and with a certainty of success. In a conciliatory speech, he reminded his hearers of the advantage of consistency, and that now they had the opportunity of giving effect and efficacy to their old professions. He was opposed by Fox, who had always taken the side of the House of Commons; but his

opposition was gentle. He urged that this point of privilege was now of mere antiquarian interest, and that even in the case of the Lord Mayor, Brass Crosby, the House had not ventured on expulsion as a punishment. On the division there were for Wilkes 115 votes, and against him only 47. Then came a moment of exquisite triumph. Orders were given to the clerk to fetch the records of the House, and, in his presence, all the obnoxious orders of expulsion, resolutions voting him blasphemous, obscene, etc., were deliberately expunged! Can anything be conceived more dramatic than this reversal?

With this victory the long record of Wilkes' struggles with the House of Commons came to a close. It was an astonishing one, obtained in spite of trial, persecution, imprisonment. The victory, too, was not merely personal. He had been the means of causing constitutional principles to be 'declared' which had hitherto been encroached upon. When we come to sum up what he has done, it will be found that few of the

more celebrated reformers can point to such a record of work.

Generally, he may be said to have been the first to effectually check the arbitrary proceedings of Ministers of the Crown, and of Parliament. He made so bold and courageous a resistance that he may be considered almost a deliverer in his line. Since his time there was one attempt, under Mr. Addington, to revive the old violent tyranny of Ministers, but it speedily collapsed. It was Wilkes who really fixed in strong lines and colours the doctrine that no one in authority may lay hands on a citizen without authority given by the law.

What we owe to Wilkes may be summed up thus particularly. He overthrew the practice of general warrants, which went far deeper than a mere point of law, and furnished arbitrary Ministers with a convenient instrument against those who were obnoxious to them. He checked the arrogant pretensions of Parliament, which had become too obsequious to the behests of the Sovereign and Ministers, thus making

the representative of the people more independent. He hindered that dangerous encroachment on liberty, the seating in the House of Commons a member who had not been elected by the people. And finally, he struck the first blow for the liberty of the Press, doing battle for those who had been forbidden to report the Proceedings of Parliament.

It was no wonder indeed that contemporaries gazed with astonishment at this complete reversal, which seemed like a miracle. No one was so annoyed as Walpole, who both despised and disliked him. 'Nothing,' he said, 'could demolish him. He equally baffled Wilkes and Parson Horne, though both neglected no latitude to compass his ruin.' He heard that Wilkes gave out, 'If the King had sent me a free pardon and £1,000 to Paris, I should have accepted them; *but I am obliged to him for not having ruined me.*' In this cynical speech we have the key to Wilkes' whole course, and a shrewd piece of political instruction.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Unluckily, previous extravagances, and the great outlay involved by the mayoralty, had pressed heavily on Wilkes, and we find him, at its close, reduced to sore straits for money. He was often, we are told, 'in actual want of a guinea.' Once more his untiring friends came to his aid with a subscription, and Bull, his late antagonist, helped him with many advances.*

* This worthy friend, however, could not keep pace with his drafts :

'I have been exceedingly unhappy,' he wrote to him, 'on your account ever since I saw you last; and can with truth say, I never wished to serve you more than at this time—but prudence prevents. As to cancelling the deed, I think I cannot do it; but I shall have no objection to giving it up to Mr. Hayley, in your and Mr. Reynolds' presence. If the produce of the trust had been sufficient, you should certainly have had the full

Under this pressure he cast about him seriously for some substantial and permanent mode of support, and fixed his eyes on the rich and comfortable office of City Chamberlain. Here, again, we find his wonderful power of securing whatever was the object of his wishes. The difficulties in his way were great; for, though there was an election every year, it was a purely formal one, and the holder retained it 'during good behaviour.' Fortunately, in 1776, it became vacant through resignation, and Wilkes announced himself as a candidate. But through the

---

£600 per annum; but as you know I have paid more than I have received, I cannot go further till I receive more.

'As to the cup, I was fearful you might be tempted to place it in the hands of some person for little more than half its value, and not be suffered to redeem it when you were willing. Rather than this, I wished to keep it for you, at least for the present. If you approve sending it me, I will return you a draft for £50 on account of it. I need not say to you, that I don't want to purchase it at that price. I only mean to stop the gap for the present, which I hope you will soon be able to do yourself. I am myself so poorly (and not bettered by thinking of your unhappy situation), that I scarce know what I write.'

exertions of his enemies—both at Court and in the City—he was defeated, and one Hopkins was elected.

Wilkes, who had little delicacy where his interests were concerned, came forward without scruple to oppose Hopkins in the year following, and was again defeated, this time by the overwhelming majority of 1,196 votes. The perseverance of our hero was never displayed with more effect. Though it was known that the electors were disgusted by this exhibition of greed, he was in nowise daunted, and again in July, 1788, strove to dislodge his opponent. Once more he met with a discreditable repulse, receiving but 289 votes to Hopkins' 1,216. After this, another would have thought his case desperate, and have retired.

But his perseverance was, as usual, to be rewarded. Once more the lucky wheel turned. His opponent died. No other candidate ventured to come forward, and in the month of December, 1779, Mr. John Wilkes became Chamberlain of the City of London, an office of great emolument that

put him at his ease for the rest of his course.

This valuable and substantial post he retained until his death. We can fancy how indignant he would have been had any candidate, standing on strict right, ventured to contest it with him, year by year. The emoluments were sadly wanted by him. As he wrote to his friend Petrie: 'No congratulation on my late success could be more welcome to me. It is a post adequate, after the payment of my debts, to every wish I can form at fifty-three: profit, patronage, and extensive usefulness, with rank and dignity—the Chamberlain of London.'

It is said that he made an efficient, painstaking official, looking carefully after the City business and accounts. He was particularly effective in those complimentary addresses to heroes and statesmen which he was called on to deliver when the 'Freedom' of the City was given. These discourses always began with the antique form: '*I give you joy!*' And he thus had the satisfaction of addressing Nelson and others.

One of the earliest of Samuel Rogers' recollections was seeing Wilkes walking down to the City of a morning arrayed in a laced scarlet coat and boots; for at this time he had resumed the rank and uniform of Colonel Wilkes. Such we see him in a sketch of Sayer's, where he is shown as worn and prematurely old, and also *sans* teeth.*

* Thomas Dibdin, the prolific dramatist, then apprenticed to a harsh master, describes how he made his way to the Guildhall to complain of his treatment. He supplies a pleasant sketch of Wilkes' tact and good-nature:

'After I had most pathetically enlarged on the cruelty of the master, I showed my marks; portrayed the desolation and entire destruction of my property, and indignantly concluded by demanding a summons for my oppressor to attend, and be made a terrible example. "I grant you a summons with pleasure, young gentleman!" replied the Chamberlain, whose eye appeared directed to another person, "and I'll tell you why: I have no doubt but your master will tell the story another way, and I am anxious to know whether I ought to fine him, or send you to Bridewell."

'I wrote him a letter of four full sides on foolscap, and left it myself at his house in Duke Street, Westminster, in which I appealed to his love of the arts, styled him the natural protector of all apprentices, and remonstrated on the bad taste of suffering a scion of genius like myself, instead of treading in the steps of my

There is a letter of Wilkes' to his daughter which seems to show that he could combine attention to City financial interests with his own profit. A Government plan was on foot in 1784 for paying off Navy Bills. Wilkes frankly confessed to his daughter that the terms offered were not advantageous to the

---

father, to be chained seven years to study the arts of buying and selling. All this, and much more, I stated to Johnny. When the cause came at length to issue, I was told to repeat my complaint in the presence of my master, whose stern eye would have abated much of my courage. The Chamberlain, with much moderation, and indeed good-humour, said that he also was a lover of the drama in proper time and place, and his respect for the talents of my father led him (the magistrate) to hope that I also possessed mind enough to perceive how much I was in the wrong; that my letter to him made matters rather worse. He next admonished my principal not in future to degrade his dependents by *coups de bâton*, which spoiled the spirit of London apprentices, whose legal guardian he was, and would be while he sat in that chair, *or why did he sit there at all?* He added that young men might have worse propensities than a love for the theatre, or a taste for copying scenery. In conclusion, he advised us to forget the present matter, and he was sure that I would be as ready henceforward to deserve, as the governor would be to dispense, reward instead of punishment. The Chamberlain's court re-echoed with whispered approbations of his eloquence and his justice.'

public, but were 'still great for me, *who possess so much Navy prior in date to June*, 1782. I shall dispose of all this, and still I have a noble parcel behind, the interest of which is to be regularly paid. The consequence will be a very tolerable round sum from the profits of the Navy Bills to June, 1782, and the money, which I replace to the City, I intend to lay out in new Navy and Victualling Bills, *the handsome profits of which will come to the Chamberlain.*'

In May, 1784, he was once more elected to Parliament. A scrutiny was called for by his opponent, Mr. Byng. Wilkes kept his daughter *au courant* with all the stages of the business in a series of buoyant and agreeable letters—ever fresh and unflagging in tone, and full of affection. When the scrutiny was determined in his favour, his counsel desired to add 'some few valedictory words,' on which, he says, some one in the crowd humorously called out 'Maledictory!' A petition was then menaced, but was abandoned.

Later, however, he did not feel quite

secure in his seat, and in the year 1790 abandoned his place to Mr. Byng. This was no doubt connected with that curious change in his principles which persons had begun to note. It was openly remarked what a penchant he displayed for orderly persons and opinions. There was much scoffing at this *volte face*, though many believed there was truth in his jesting declaration to his Majesty that he 'had never been a Wilkite.'

It was thought significant that his colleague at the election should have been Mr. Mainwaring, the Court candidate; a new circumstance in his history which gave rise to further scoffs.*

* An epigram that was in circulation treats him with much severity:

'POLITICAL CONSISTENCY.

'What! Liberty-Wilkes, of oppression the hater,
Call'd a turncoat, a Judas, a rogue, and a traitor?
What has made all our patriots so angry and sore?
Has Wilkes done that now which he ne'er did before?

'Consistent was John all the days of his life;
For he loved his best friends as he loved his own wife;
In his actions he always kept self in his view,
Though false to the world to John Wilkes he was true!'

His letters to his daughter are now full of sneers at the patriot Fox. 'I wonder it has not been said of Fox as of Adam, "Some pious tears he dropt; but wiped them soon." I laughed at the idea of their being preserved in a crystal vial.' He was inexpressively shocked at the excesses of the French mob, and he could praise Mr. Pitt.

In the year 1789, Wilkes, who was fond of making excursions through the kingdom, discovered a cottage belonging to Lord Winchilsea, in the Isle of Wight, and to which he often retired for a long residence. This he fitted up with all his china—of which he had a collection—his rare prints, Tuscan vases, and other 'curios.' Here he would remain for weeks, and often for months, enjoying his books and corresponding with his daughter. In his own pleasant,

---

Sheridan's lines are well known:

'Johnny Wilkes, Johnny Wilkes,
Thou greatest of bilks,
How changed are the notes you now sing;
Your famed Forty-five
Is Prerogative,
And your Blasphemy "God save the King."'

agreeable style he dwells on the homely incidents of his pastoral existence.

'The gardener's wife increases in size almost as much as his pumpkins, and next month we suppose one or more strangers will arrive at the cottage. He is said to be very attentive to, and careful of, his mate.

'There are thirteen pea-fowls at the cottage, between whom some solemn gallantries are continually passing; and the gallinis are as brisk and amorous as any French *petits-maîtres*. The consequences I foresee.

'Old ocean is quite in a fury, and big waves lash the affrighted shores. What a contrast to your peaceful bosquets! No poet ever painted the sea in a storm beyond old Homer, who was born, and lived, on the grand shores of Greece and Asia Minor.'

Who would think that this was the turbulent combative Wilkes! More amusing is it to find the reformed patriot moralizing over the violence of mobs:

'I believed the late barbarities in France exceeded those even of their own St. Bar-

thelemy, as well as of all other nations, but I was mistaken. Such in most ages has been the savage madness of the mere multitude, when uncontrolled, ignorant, and fanatic in any cause. *History necessarily records such events, but at the same time becomes quite disgusting.*'

In 1791 he was 'shocked to read of the savage, cruel, and persecuting spirit of the mechanics at Birmingham; and I trust that Government will exert itself in the punishment *of so vile and wicked a crew.*'

A more extraordinary change was to find him solicitous about a chapel that a Lady Shuldam was erecting, and for which he offered to trace out with his humble pen proper inscriptions in a 'cause which he had at heart.'

There was a sort of romantic poetical turn in Wilkes' nature, which he exhibited in a fantastic, if not pagan way. In his dire extremity, after, as he said, being 'broken on the wheel of fortune,' he declared that now, his cruel wounds being healed, he would dedicate to 'Fortuna Redux.' He actually did so;

and on the walls of his cottage was affixed a tablet with an inscription. Here was found all his choice china—Wedgwood, and other kinds—together with a fine library, specially selected by this true epicurean for his entertainment by the seaside.

There were also verses and inscriptions to his friend Churchill and to his daughter Polly. Visitors, however, were much scandalized by other decorations and paintings.

It was when he was living here that he received a visit from the younger Reynolds, who furnishes a pleasing picture of his good-humour and vivacity:

'On my way I called on Mr. Wilkes, then residing at his villa (late the property of General Heatherset) near Sandown Fort. His dress, excepting in one instance, was perfectly Arcadian; instead of a crook, he walked about his grounds with a hoe, raking up weeds, and destroying vipers.

'Observing that I admired his numerous collection of pigeons, he described to me the difficulty he had experienced in his attempts to make them stay with him. Every bird

that he had procured from England, Ireland and France having flown back to its native land the moment the latch was raised, he was about to abandon his scheme as impracticable, "When," he continued, "I bethought myself to procure a cock and hen pouter from Scotland; I need not add that *they never returned!*" '

This pleasant speech exhibits Wilkes' gaiety at its best.

'Wilkes then conducting me over the remainder of his grounds, showed me a large pond in his garden, which he said he had been compelled to have well stocked with carp, tench, perch, and eels; "because," he added, 'fish is almost the only rare article by the seaside."

'He, however, praised the Newport market, which he regularly attended, and said that the *glance* from his eye, as he facetiously termed his squint, had done great execution with the farmer's pretty daughters in that quarter. "But," he continued, "my *glance*, I am sorry to say, has not everywhere met with a similar success; for another

person in the town, a lottery-office keeper, actually offered me, the other day, half a ticket not to pass and repass his shop-door during the drawing; positively swearing that since my visit to Newport he could not calculate his losses at less than *two blanks to a squint!*'

It was indeed this *gaieté de cœur* that attracted to him so many of the best and most correct characters of his day. It was so with the learned Charles Butler, strictest of Roman Catholics, who seems to have regarded him with an affectionate admiration, and describes him as 'a delightful and instructive companion, but too often offensive by his freedom of speech when religion or the sex was mentioned. In his manner and habits he was an elegant epicurean; yet it was evident to all his intimates that he feared:

'"Manes aliquot et subterranea regna."

In his real politics he was an aristocrat. His distresses threw him into politics; he assumed the character of a staunch Whig, and all

must admit his consistency. The influence of the Crown he described to be irresistible.' Mr. Butler added, 'Fox held the same opinion: "No one," he said, "could conceive its extent, effect, and influence."'

Wilkes abounded in anecdote. Wagers have been gained that from the time he quitted his home till he reached the Guildhall no one would address him who would leave him without a smile and hearty laugh. Even with his old enemy Lord Sandwich he was on the best of terms. Once when Mr. Butler excused himself for not keeping an appointment, saying 'he had been detained by Mr. Wilkes,' Lord Sandwich said, 'Mr. Wilkes had so often made him break appointments, it was only fair that he should suffer from the same cause.' To Butler he often spoke of an imaginary history of his life, even begging of him to take charge of it after his decease—though a few pages was all that he accomplished.*

'Did we not hear,' said Johnson, 'so much

* One of the redeeming features in Wilkes' character was this absence of rancour. With others of his deadly

THE PEOPLE'S PA... Beaumont Trus... FOR EAST LONDON

said of Jack Wilkes, we should think more highly of his conversations. Jack has a variety of talk; Jack is a scholar; and Jack has the manners of a gentleman. But we are disappointed in his company. He has always been at me; but I would rather do Jack a kindness than not.'

The amiable Mackintosh takes a very indulgent view of his character, declaring that the lukewarm submission of his later life can be explained 'by the varieties of age and station,' without any imputation of insincerity. He declares that his victory in the case of general warrants was 'the most important accession to personal liberty since the Revolution.'

Boswell, that 'King of Bores,' as Walpole styles him, seems to have had a particular fancy for Wilkes' company, although his sense of orthodoxy was in a perpetual struggle with his feelings. His allusions in his book are in the worst taste, as when he

---

foes he became reconciled. Even to Horne Tooke he sent a present of one of his choice privately-printed works.

reports Johnson saying 'that Wilkes would rob the shops, and debauch the citizens' daughters.' With a strange insensibility he speaks of 'reporting this sally *in his presence*' (!), etc. In one mistake he calls him '*a* Mr. Wilkes;' but this was a printer's error.

Yet Boswell could write to him on its publication :

'My dear Sir,

'You said to me yesterday of my *magnum opus,* "It is a wonderful book." Do confirm this to me, so as I may have your *testimonium* in my archives at Auchinleck.'*

It was scarcely surprising that when the famous volumes appeared Wilkes should have

* Some years ago this very copy, Wilkes' own, was offered for sale by Messrs. Robson and Kerslake; but the inspection was a disappointment. There were not a score of notes, and the corrections were of a trivial kind. One related to Johnson's objection to coming behind the scenes at Drury Lane, of which he gave the true version.

been disgusted. The volumes reached him at his favourite Sandown Cottage, and elicited his lively criticism.

'The earth is as thirsty as Boswell, and as cracked in many places as he certainly is in one. His book, however, is that of an entertaining madman. Poor Johnson! Does a friend come and add to the gross character of such a man the unknown trait of disgusting gluttony? I shall bring his two quartos back with me, and will point out numberless mistakes; but there are many excellent things in them. I suspect not unfrequently a mistake in the *dramatis personæ*. He has put down to *Boswell* what was undoubtedly said by *Johnson*—what the latter did, and the former could not, say. The motto to his book should have been the two lines of Pope:

> 'Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
> And if he lies not, must at least betray.'

Boswell, however, atoned for his want of tact by one signal service—when he increased the 'public stock of harmless pleasure' by

his report of that wonderful meeting between Wilkes and Johnson. This may be pronounced a most artistically effective and dramatic passage; the language, arrangement and colouring are in the best style of old comedy; the figures rounded and brilliant as Zoffany's colours; the dialogue no less spirited. Familiar as the incident is, it presents so good a picture of Wilkes and his new friend that it cannot be omitted here.*

It will be recollected that almost from the first Johnson was Wilkes' sternest opponent. Wilkes, however, had been the first to attack, having fallen foul of Johnson and his pension in the *North Briton*. 'What!' said Wilkes on another occasion, in a more offensive strain, 'does *he* talk of liberty? Liberty is as ridiculous in his mouth as religion is in mine.' Johnson wrote pam-

* Wilkes' dislike of the Scotch was maintained to the end of his life. Boswell, dining with the Sheriffs and Judges at the Old Bailey, complained that he had had his pocket picked of his handkerchief. 'Poh, poh!' said the Alderman, 'it is nothing but the ostentation of a Scotchman, to let the world know that he had possessed a pocket-handkerchief.'

phlets against him, in which the patriot was denounced as a sort of enemy of the human race. Boswell thus describes their meeting:

'My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq. But I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes together. How to manage it was a nice and difficult matter. My worthy booksellers and friends, Messrs. Dilly, in the Poultry, had invited me to meet Mr. Wilkes and some more gentlemen on Wednesday, May 15th, 1776.

'"Pray," said I, "let us have Dr. Johnson."

'"What! with Mr. Wilkes? Not for the world," said Mr. Edward Dilly; "Dr. Johnson would never forgive me."

'"Come," said I, "if you will let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well."

'*Dilly:* "Nay, if you will take it upon you,

I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here."

'Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr. Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes, sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch." I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus:

'"Mr. Dilly, sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland."

'*Johnson:* "Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will wait upon him."

'*Boswell:* "Provided, sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you?"

'*Johnson:* "What do you mean, sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?"

'*Boswell:* "I beg your pardon, sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotic friends with him."

'*Johnson:* "Well, sir, and what then? What care *I* for his *patriotic friends?* Poh!"

'*Boswell:* "I should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there."

'*Johnson:* "And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me*, sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if

I could not meet any company whatever occasionally."

'*Boswell:* "Pray forgive me, sir; I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me."

'Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.'

But when the Wednesday came round the Doctor was not in the humour to go; but by another ingenious stratagem Boswell prevailed. 'He roared, "Frank, a clean shirt!" and was very soon dressed. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna Green.

'When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing-room he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly:

'"Who is that gentleman, sir?"

'"Mr. Arthur Lee."

'*Johnson:* "Too, too, too," under his breath, which was one of his habitual mutterings. "And who is the gentleman in lace?"

'"Mr. Wilkes, sir."

'This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and, taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself.

'The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table" dissolved his reverie, and we *all* sat down without any symptom of ill-humour. There were present, besides Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physic at Edinburgh, Mr. (now Sir John) Miller, Dr. Lettsom, and Mr. Slater, the druggist.

'Mr. Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness that he gained upon him insensibly. No man ate more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal.

'"Pray give me leave, sir; it is better here. A little of the brown; some fat, sir; a little of the stuffing; some gravy. Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter. Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange—or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest."

'"Sir, sir—I am obliged to you, sir!" cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue," but, in a short while, of complacency.

'Mr. Wilkes remarked that, "among all the bold flights of Shakespeare's imagination, the boldest was making Birnam Wood march to Dunsinane—creating a wood where there never was a shrub. A wood in Scotland! Ha, ha, ha!"

'*Wilkes:* "We have no City Poet now; that is an office which has gone into disuse. The last was Elkanah Settle. There is something in *names* which one cannot help feeling. Now, *Elkanah Settle* sounds so *queer*. Who can expect much from that name? We should have no hesitation to give it for John Dryden in preference to Elkanah Settle, from

the names only, without knowing their different merits."

'*Johnson:* "I suppose, sir, Settle did as well for aldermen in his time as John Home could do now. Where did Beckford and Trecothick learn English?"

'Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it.

'*Johnson:* "Why, sir, all barrenness is comparative. The *Scotch* would not know it to be barren."

'*Boswell:* "Come, come; he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there."

'*Johnson:* "Why, yes, sir; meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home."

'All these quick and lively sallies were said sportively, quite in jest, and with a smile, which showed that he meant only wit. Upon this topic he and Mr. Wilkes could perfectly assimilate. When I claimed a superiority for

Scotland over England in one respect: that no man can be arrested there for a debt merely because another swears it against him; he must swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is *in meditatione fugæ*—

'*Wilkes:* "That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation."

'*Johnson* (to Mr. Wilkes): "You must know, sir, I lately took my friend Boswell and showed him genuine civilized life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility; for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London."

'*Wilkes:* "Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people like you and me."

'*Johnson* (smiling): "And we ashamed of him."

'They were quite frank and easy. Johnson told the story of his asking Mrs. Macaulay to allow her footman to sit down with them, to prove the ridiculousness of the argument for the equality of mankind; and he

said to me afterwards, with a nod of satisfaction, "You saw Mr. Wilkes acquiesced."

'Wilkes talked with all imaginable freedom of the ludicrous title given to the Attorney-General, *Diabolus Regis;* adding, "I have reason to know something about that officer, for I was prosecuted for a libel."

'Johnson, who many people would have supposed must have been furiously angry at hearing this talked of so lightly, said not a word. He was now, *indeed*, "a good-humoured fellow."

'Mr. Wilkes held a candle to show a fine print of a beautiful female figure which hung in the room, and pointed out the elegant contour with the finger of an arch connoisseur. He afterwards, in a conversation with me, waggishly insisted that all the time Johnson showed visible signs of a fervent admiration of the corresponding charms of the fair Quaker.

'Mr. Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negotiation*, and pleasantly said "that there was nothing equal to it in the whole history of the *Corps Diplomatique*."

There is no one but must be entertained with this meeting, so admirably described. It took place in 1776, the year after Wilkes' mayoralty. Five years later, in May, 1781, another meeting took place.

'No negotiation was now required to bring them together; for Johnson was so well satisfied with the former interview that he was very glad to meet Wilkes again, who was this day seated between Dr. Beattie and Dr. Johnson (between *Truth* and *Reason*, as General Paoli said, when I told him of it).

'*Wilkes:* "I have been thinking, Dr. Johnson, that there should be a Bill brought into Parliament that the controverted elections for Scotland should be tried in that country, at their own Abbey of Holyrood House, and not here; for the consequence of trying them here is, that we have an inundation of Scotchmen, who come up and never go back again. Now here is Boswell, who is come upon the election for his own county, which will not last a fortnight."

'*Johnson:* "Nay, sir, I see no reason why

they should be tried at all; for, you know, one Scotchman is as good as another."

'*Wilkes:* "Pray, Boswell, how much may be got in a year by an Advocate at the Scotch bar?"

'*Boswell:* "I believe, two thousand pounds."

'*Wilkes:* "How can it be possible to spend that money in Scotland?"

'*Johnson:* "Why, sir, the money may be spent in England; but there is a harder question. If one man in Scotland gets possession of two thousand pounds, what remains for all the rest of the nation?"

'*Wilkes:* "You know, in the last war, the immense booty which Thurot carried off by the complete plunder of seven Scotch isles; he re-embarked with three-and-six-pence."

'Here again Johnson and Wilkes joined in extravagant sportive raillery upon the supposed poverty of Scotland, which Dr. Beattie and I did not think it worth our while to dispute.

'The subject of quotation being introduced, Mr. Wilkes censured it as pedantry.

'*Johnson:* "No, sir, it is a good thing; there is a community of mind in it. Classical quotation is the parole of literary men all over the world."

Wilkes: 'Upon the Continent they all quote the Vulgate Bible. Shakespeare is chiefly quoted here; and we quote also Pope, Prior, Butler, Waller, and sometimes Cowley."'

In the course of the evening Wilkes gave Johnson an opening for one of his readiest and most masterly strokes, yet it was in good-humour. A discussion had arisen on the exportation of coin, Johnson arguing there was a law against it.

'*Johnson:* "Is there not a law, sir?"

'*Wilkes* answered: "Yes, sir; but might not the House of Commons, in case of real evident necessity, order our own current coin to be sent into our own colonies?"

'Here Johnson, with that quickness of recollection which distinguished him so eminently, gave the Middlesex Patriot an admirable retort upon his own ground.

'"Sure, sir, you don't think a resolution of

the House of Commons equal to the law of the land ?"

'*Wilkes* (at once perceiving the application): "God forbid, sir."

'To hear what had been treated with such violence in "The False Alarm" now turned into pleasant repartee, was extremely agreeable.

'Mr. Beauclerk's great library was this season sold in London by auction. Mr. Wilkes said he wondered to find in it such a numerous collection of sermons ; seeming to think it strange that a gentleman of Mr. Beauclerk's character in the gay world should have chosen to have many compositions of that kind.

'*Johnson :* "Why, sir, you are to consider that sermons make a considerable branch of English literature ; so that a library must be very imperfect if it has not a numerous collection of sermons : and in all collections, sir, the desire of augmenting them grows stronger in proportion to the advance in acquisition, as motion is accelerated by the continuance of the impetus. Besides, sir"

(looking at Mr. Wilkes with a placid but significant smile), "a man may collect sermons with intention of making himself better by them. I hope Mr. Beauclerk intended that some time or other that should be the case with him."

'Mr. Wilkes said to me, loud enough for Dr. Johnson to hear: "Dr. Johnson should make me a present of his 'Lives of the Poets,' as I am a poor patriot, who cannot afford to buy them." Johnson seemed to take no notice of this hint; but in a little while he called to Mr. Dilly: "Pray, sir, be so good as to send a set of my 'Lives' to Mr. Wilkes, with my compliments." This was accordingly done; and Mr. Wilkes paid Dr. Johnson a visit, was courteously received, and sat with him a long time.

'The company gradually dropped away. Mr. Dilly himself was called downstairs upon business. I left the room for some time; when I returned, I was struck with observing Dr. Samuel Johnson and John Wilkes, Esq., literally *tête-à-tête;* for they were reclined upon their chairs, with their heads leaning

almost close to each other, and talking earnestly, in a kind of confidential whisper, of the personal quarrel between George II: and the King of Prussia. Such a scene of perfectly easy sociality between two such opponents in the war of political controversy, as that which I now beheld, would have been an excellent subject for a picture. It presented to my mind the happy days which are foretold in Scripture, when the lion shall lie down with the kid.

'When I mentioned,' adds Boswell, 'this to the Bishop of Killaloe, "With the goat," said his lordship. Such, however, was the engaging politeness and pleasantry of Mr. Wilkes, and such the social good-humour of the Bishop, that when they dined together at Mr. Dilly's, where I also was, they were mutually agreeable.'*

* Boswell reports many of Wilkes's witty but profane jests. Talking of the resurrection of the body, he said: 'I should no more value being raised with the same body, than being raised in the same coat, waistcoat, and breeches.' What he sets down as his own contribution to the wit of these meetings shows his usual *niaiserie.* Thus he says: 'When Wilkes and I sat together each glass of wine produced a flash of wit, like gunpowder

Mr. John Taylor, who knew Wilkes well, has preserved some of his jests. Many of his repartees, without much pretension, have a gay spontaneousness that pleases. A lady once asked him to take a hand at whist, but he declined in the following terms: 'Dear lady, do not ask me, for I am so ignorant that I cannot distinguish the difference between a king and a knave!' In a dispute between Sir Watkin Lewes and himself, the former said: 'I'll be your butt no longer.' 'With all my heart,' said Wilkes; 'I never like an empty one.' Not certainly one of his brilliant strokes. It was generally

---

thrown into the fire—Puff! puff!' And his retort on the rough demagogue: 'I mentioned my having been in Tothill Fields Bridewell; how the keeper had let me in, etc. *Wilkes:* "I don't wonder at your getting in, but that you got out." *Bos.:* "Oh no, I have no propensity to be a gaol-bird; I never had the honour you have had [he looking a little disconcerted, as the pill rather too strong] —I mean being Lord Mayor of London; I mean the golden *chain.* I never had the honour to have a chain of any sort."' And again: 'At Mr. Aubrey's, 19th April, Wilkes *and I hard at it.* I warm on monarchy. "Poh! your'n old Tory." *Boswell:* "And you're a new Tory. *Let that stand for that.*"'

rumoured at the time that Wilkes wrote an answer to a satirical letter to Sir Watkin from Horne Tooke, when Sir Watkin was Sheriff. The answer concluded as follows: 'It only remains, sir, for me, in my office of Sheriff, to attend you to that fate which you have long deserved, and which the people have impatiently expected.'

Upon another occasion he displayed his sarcastic humour on royalty, for he said 'he loved the King (George III.) so much, that he hoped never to see another.' Upon having a snuff-box presented to him to take a pinch, he said: 'No, sir, I thank you; I have no small vices.' This (if original) has become an adopted common form in social talk. One evening, when the House of Commons was going to adjourn, he begged permission to make a speech, 'For,' said he, 'I have sent a copy to the *Public Advertiser*, and how ridiculous should I appear if it were published without having been delivered.' When he was member for Aylesbury, he invited the Mayor to visit him in London, promising him a hospitable reception. The

Mayor, who had never been in the Metropolis, declined the invitation, alleging that he had heard London 'contained nothing but rogues, etc.' Wilkes, with a confidential air, said: 'Why, to tell you the truth, Mr. Mayor, I have reason to believe that there are in London a few suspected characters.'

The caustic 'Sexagenarian' Beloe, who seems to have known Wilkes personally, supplies this description of his broader manner:

'He was really a sad dog, but most delightfully amusing, facetious, witty, well-informed, and with much various, though not profound, learning. He was sometimes so intolerably sarcastic, and more particularly at the expense of his friends in the City, that the wonder is how he could so long continue in their good graces. He never put any restraint upon himself, when in company, on the other side of Temple Bar, but indulged in all the satire of his wit, at the citizens' expense. Thus, when confined in the King's Bench, he was waited upon by a deputation from some ward in the City, when the office

of alderman was vacant, who undertook to remonstrate with Wilkes on the danger to the public peace which would result from his offering himself as a candidate. After much useless conversation, one of the deputies at length exclaimed :

'"Well, Mr. Wilkes, we must take the sense of the ward."

'"With all my heart," replied Wilkes. "I will take the non-sense, and beat you ten to one."

'Upon another occasion he attended a City dinner. Among the guests was a noisy, vulgar deputy—a great glutton—who, on his entering the dinner-room, always with great deliberation took off his wig, suspended it on a pin, and with due solemnity put on a white cotton nightcap. Wilkes, who certainly was a high-bred man, and never accustomed to similar exhibitions, could not take his eyes from so strange and novel a picture. At length the deputy, with unblushing familiarity, walked up to Wilkes, and asked him whether he did not think that his nightcap became him ?

'"Oh yes, sir," replied Wilkes; "but it would look much better if it was pulled quite over your face."

'Wilkes seemed to seize, with particular avidity, every opportunity to play upon Boswell when anything relating to Scotland was introduced.

'"You must acknowledge, my friend Wilkes," observed Boswell one day, "that the approach to Edinburgh from the London Road presents a very picturesque and interesting picture."

'"Why, so it perhaps may," returned Wilkes; "but when I was there the wind was in my face, and it brought with it such a confounded stink that I was obliged to keep my handkerchief to my nose the whole of the way, and could see nothing of the prospect."

'Not long afterwards, Boswell was speaking of some Scotch nobleman who was very fond of planting, and had ornamented his domain with some very fine and beautiful forest-trees.

'"Where could this possibly be?" said Wilkes. "I travelled through the country

with an American servant; and after we had visited various places in different parts of Scotland, I inquired of him what his general opinion was of the country.

'"'Oh, sir,' replied the American, 'it is *finely cleared.*'"

'There was a heavy Lord Mayor in Wilkes' time, who, by persevering steadily in the pursuit of one object, accumulated an immense fortune, and rose progressively from the dignity of Common Councilman to the state-coach and the Mansion House. His first entrance into life was as a common bricklayer. At one of the Old Bailey dinners, his lordship, after a sumptuous repast on turbot and venison, was eating an immense quantity of butter with his cheese.

'"Why, brother," said Wilkes, "you lay it on with a *trowel.*"

'He called one morning upon a friend who resided in a very close and retired situation in the City, but who had a small opening before his house of a few yards square, and two plants, which once looked like lilacs, in large tubs, adorned his windows. Men were

employed in painting the outside of the house.

'"Brother," said Wilkes to his friend, "suffer me to plead in behalf of these two poor lilacs in the tubs; pray let them be painted too."'

But his wittiest saying was the admirable retort to the debauched Lord Sandwich — unsurpassed for its point, appropriateness, and crushing force.*

In his opulent leisure Wilkes could indulge his more elegant tastes for literature and classical studies. This he particularly exhibited in that most costly form of epicureanism—privately-printed editions of favourite

* This is, of course, the well-known answer to Lord Sandwich's coarse speculation as to what would be the manner of Wilkes' death, naming also very offensive alternatives. 'That depends,' said Wilkes, 'on whether I embrace your lordship's principles, or,' etc. It is run very close by his friend Johnson's no less powerful retort to the waterman. The originality of Wilkes' reply has, however, been disputed, and it has been claimed by the French, as having been uttered by Mirabeau to the Abbé Maury. But Lord Brougham was assured by the old *viveur*, the Duke of Norfolk, that he was present, and heard the passage between Wilkes and Lord Sandwich. This was of course long before the French revolution.

authors. In 1788 appeared 'Catullus,'* followed in 1790 by 'Theophrastus,' a companion volume. He gave away the copies to all the distinguished amateurs of the day, and received from them pleasing letters of acknowledgment. He edited Busbequius, and other writers. He also made some progress in a translation of 'Anacreon.' Italian he knew well, and with Spanish was not unacquainted. German was not in his day a favourite language. In French, however, he might have contested the palm with Gibbon.

All through his life, indeed, Wilkes was busy *printing*. He printed at Berlin, Paris, London, and, as we have seen, had a private press. A scarce and curious work, 'Recherches sur l'Origine du Despotisme orientale, ouvrage posthume de M. Boulanger,' was privately printed at his press.

In 1769 his Letters and Speeches were collected in three volumes; and in 1788 his

* '*Caius Valerius Catullus. Recensuit Johannes Wilkes, Anglus. Typis Johannis Nichols.*' A small quarto volume. Three copies were printed on vellum, and one hundred on fine writing-paper.

Speeches were published by himself, in one octavo volume. His speeches were, in fact, prepared compositions; he did not possess the gift of extempore speaking, nor was his delivery, though of course not improper, such as to give any force to what he had prepared. His best effort was thought to be a speech in defence of Mr. Hastings, which contains much matter, but it has little of oratory. He, however, did not carry out his own recipe for being successful in House of Commons oratory, when he told Boswell to be as 'impudent as you can, as merry as you can, and say whatever comes uppermost. Jack Lee is the best heard of any counsel, and he is the most impudent dog, and always abusing us.'

His literary life, however, is marked by enterprises begun and left unfinished. Announcement was made of two little volumes to contain all the papers connected with his cause, but only one appeared. It was the same with his 'English Liberty,' left incomplete. He had engaged to write the full history of 'The Massacre in St. George's

Fields,' but never even began it. The solemn duty he had undertaken for Churchill did not extend beyond a few rough notes.* His handwriting was beautiful, close, and crowded, but bright and legible. As a letter-writer he was admirable, and his compositions in this line were full of liveliness and wit.

* I have already told the story of the scarcely commenced 'History of England.' Mr. Tedder, librarian of the Athenæum Club, has shown me a copy of Winckelman's letters which belonged to Wilkes, in which the author mentions a new excuse for the non-completion of the history. It seems Wilkes had been robbed of the work, with jewels and other property, by Mdme. Corradini, the lady who travelled with him. This fiction is completely disproved by Wilkes's own MS. account of his separation from that person, which was carried out in the most harmonious spirit, with lavish presents of money, etc. See vol. i., p. 275.

CHAPTER XII.

WILKES' CORRESPONDENTS.

WILKES, like Garrick, was in the habit of preserving all or most of the letters addressed to him; and at his death a vast mass of papers was found to have been accumulated. These are among the stores of the British Museum, where they fill more than a dozen huge volumes. Having diligently worked my way through this undigested mass, it must be confessed that the task was most uninteresting, and even unprofitable, as from the character of the papers there was little to repay one for the labour expended. Almost all the letters are from obscure persons; while those from a few persons of note are of the most neutral kind — chiefly acknowledging some civility. The former class, however, are significant, as showing how harassed he was

with the claims of former dependents and humble admirers, who, in a fashion that causes a smile, seized on the occasion of any advancement to press their claims for a few guineas. Here we find the extraordinary contrast to the correspondence of such a man as Garrick, who was universally respected and admired, and perhaps loved; whose twelve hundred letters, thus preserved, show his relations with the very first persons in the land, and exhibit an almost dramatic earnestness and intention: and most of which offer something that entertains. Wilkes' French correspondents, it should be said, are of a superior class, and he succeeded in interesting such persons as Crebillon, Suard, Helvetius, D'Holbach, Barthélemy, De Beaumont, and many more.

From these papers we find that as Wilkes grew prosperous, the agents of his old vices became whips to scourge him. Old instruments, long forgotten, suddenly appear to come to life—old 'flames' reduced to destitution—old allies who had served him in his old King's Bench days, becoming of a sudden

troublesome. In this way appeared poor Cotes — bankrupt and ruined — who, after congratulating him on his happy fortune, implored him, 'for the sake of that old friendship,' to indulge him with 'five guineas out of what is due to me.'*

Wilkes, as we have seen, had helped by his fatal friendship and encouragement to wreck the fine nature of Churchill. But Churchill's own example and influence had bequeathed to society a legacy of shame, in the shape of his son—another Charles Churchill—an impecunious reprobate. This person, after some attempts at political life, had been reduced to beggary, and was cast off by his relatives as one whom it was hopeless to reform. He, however, never let go his hold of Wilkes,

* From another applicant, to whom he had made the excuse that he had not time, came a ferocious epistle: 'Since you have not time to frank two covers for a lady whose relations have given you charity when you was in the King's Bench, I have found time to send you the Bill you owe to my friend Mrs. Ashley, now Robinson, and unless you pay it imidiately (*sic*) I shall take such methods as the law directs, not only that, I shall *find time* to convince your country what a Traytor you have been to it.'

whom he persecuted with long letters to the one tune—demands for money: the claim being founded on his father's friendship for Wilkes. This unhappy being—who could write well and powerfully—in one of his appeals requiring him to intercede with an obdurate uncle, declared, in the style of his father, 'I am confident I have been guilty of every excess of youth;' then demanding a few guineas, which he no doubt received. A short time after, Wilkes was informed by a friend that 'Churchill has been playing the devil,' but who cynically added, it was 'the luckiest folly he had committed.' Wilkes, however, applied to the uncle, and received for answer a card, which we find pasted on the graceless *roué's* letter:

'*Whenever I recommend a child to his care, call me villain. If an opportunity should offer to serve him, where it will not be in his power to hurt another, I shall not forget his father.*'

The bitter sarcasm of this appreciation is worthy of the family. The shameless fellow, however, still pursued Wilkes, and showed ingenuity in varying his demands:

'If you have an esteem for the memory of your deceased friend, my father, you will not hesitate to do this generous act; for I declare to God that in coming to you I expended the last shilling I had, in the expectancy of being relieved by you; and that during my stay in town I had to pawn my great-coat and my last shirt.'

When, in 1786, Wilkes sent him a guinea, and received some thanks, but more reproaches: 'You profess yourself my friend, and will show yourself a warm one, *provided a line is chalked out.*' He had heard from some one that Wilkes had spoken of him doubtfully, so 'not perfectly understanding him, and your declining to write to me, I shall do myself the pleasure to wait on you in the evening for a personal explanation.' An agreeable prospect for Wilkes! On another occasion he demanded twenty guineas, on the plea that Wilkes 'had always promised to do something handsome.'

We have seen, also, how 'Tiger' Roche, the professional bully, had come forward at the Middlesex election, as a sort of 'bogus'

candidate. The assistance of such a being brought no credit, and also much annoyance. 'Captain Roche,' as he called himself, presuming on this service, addressed familiar letters to Wilkes, and on one occasion the following amusing composition :

'Captain Roche presents his respectful compliments to Mr. Wilkes. Should esteem it a particular honour if he would dine with him on Wednesday ; but if that day is inconvenient, begs the favour he will name some other evening.'

Then, in another ink and more agitated handwriting :

'P.S. At the period I sent you this letter, your servant, who is an impertinent fellow, refused carrying it to you. In this sense, sir, I need not dictate to you, but hope you will reprimand him properly. At the same time I essentially resent the impertinence of your servant.'

Wilkes, as was well known, had 'blazed,' and with reputation, which no doubt accounted for the fire-eater's moderate tone.

We find, also, a letter from Sterne's Eliza Draper, a rather affected composition, in answer to some compliments of Wilkes', pleading her own inability to reciprocate them. There is one episode highly characteristic. An anonymous correspondent, calling himself 'Philo-Wilkes,' had for a long time been sending him despatches of great length, written in a curious strain of half-buffoonery, but containing some useful City information, and also advice of the kind vulgarly known as 'tips.' Wilkes, recalling his Junius experience, received these communications with much interest and gratitude. This 'intercourse by letter'—the phrase of an eminent statesman—went on for a long time, when, noting their effusive strain of affectionate admiration and professions of service, the patriot ventured to suggest a small loan, which he received. Later on we come upon a communication from him to his admirer which is truly amusing. After expatiating on his sagacity, humour, and the immense service he had done him, Wilkes, with much flourish and thanks, enclosed him the amount

advanced (which, however, may have been an outstanding balance), amounting to £13 12s. 6d. This would ever remind him 'of a certain gentleman's noble conduct to me, of his magnanimous way of thinking, and the obliging confidence reposed in me. Now, as to a matter of empty compliment'—which took the shape of a present of two volumes of the writer's speeches, just published—'a poor thing, but mine own,' etc. Having thus prepared the way, our patriot arrives at a little matter of business. He was thinking of a way of benefiting his friend and increasing his income. He was proposing to raise a sum of £400 or £500 by way of annuity; and he explains how advantageous this would be for 'Philo-Wilkes,' who had 'only to name his own terms,' and put it in any way he liked. But he would thus easily secure an 'augmentation of his income.' To this proposal 'Philo-Wilkes' replied with some coolness—all his jocularity disappeared. But he declared that he did not 'deal in *post-obits*.'

I find also, among these papers, several 'pieces of occasion,' such as a humorous

address delivered before that 'sublime society, the Steaks;' a little collection of selected stories and anecdotes called 'Kensingtonia.' Wilkes was, in truth, a born author or 'writer,' for he delighted in composition of any kind, either in translating a copy of French verses, or in writing a rough 'skit' for the newspapers—or even a letter to a French friend.

A more singular record is his 'Dining Diary,' as it may be called—a record made of every dinner to which he was asked, from the year 1769 to a day within two months of his death, a period of nearly thirty years. In this little volume he set down, in his small, neat hand-writing, the house at which he dined, and the company he met. These places were of all kinds—from the City tavern to the nobleman's mansion, the Guildhall, the Mansion House, the Old Bailey—anywhere, in short, where he found pleasant company.*

* Here are a few specimens:

'*Nov.* 4, 1775. Dined in the room over the House of Commons, with Messrs. Dodd, Stephenson, etc.

'25. Dined in the Poultry with Messrs. John, Edw.,

These papers also discover to us a characteristic incident in Wilkes' new and orderly course, viz., his behaviour during the so-called

---

and Charles Dilly, Miss Wilkes, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lee, Mr. Grieve, and Mrs. Knowles.

'26. Dined at Prince's Court with Mr. A. Lee, Mr. de Ponthieu Wilkes, Mr. Smith, Mr. St. André, etc.

'27. Dined at Prince's Court with the Lord Mayor and Mr. Hayley.

'30. Dined at the Paul's Head, in Cateaton Street, with the auditors, etc.

'*Dec.* 1. Dined at Prince's Court with Governor Johnstone and Mr. Temple Luttrell.

'5. Dined at Prince's Court with the Lord Mayor, Mr. Hayley, Mr. Molineux.'

At Bath he had hardly a single day to himself. Thus:

'*Jan.* 1, 1775. Dined at the Bear with Foote, Coleman, Rice, Hickey, and Lord Kelly' (a nobleman reputed to be the author of two *dicta*—1st. That to die in a friend's house is "the greatest liberty one gentleman can take with another;" 2nd. That the English are incapable of making anything beyond a kitchen poker).

'3. Dined at Mr. Molineux's.

'4. Dined at the Circus with Mr. Plunkett.

'5. Dined at the Three Tuns with Lord Kelly, etc.

'8. Dined at Mr. Brereton's with Mr. Palmer, etc.'

He dined almost to the last, and his final entry is, 'Dined with the Lord Mayor elect, at the London Tavern,' on October 30th, 1797.

Gordon Riots of 1780. During this exciting period he kept a sort of diary which records his own extraordinary activity and efficiency. He commanded troops, for he was still *Colonel* Wilkes, searched for rioters, and earned great praise for his zeal and vigour. Here are some passages from this little record:

'8*th*. Doing duty at St. Sepulchre's churchyard till the next morning, with 18 of infantry, 10 cavalry, with a portion of the Orange Regiment of the City Militia, and the armed inhabitants of the ward. Made several prisoners, and sent them to the compter.

'9*th*. Attended at the Mansion House, and afterwards examined the prisoners at the Guildhall.

'*Saturday*, 11*th*. At eleven dispersed a great mob in Fleet Street. At Moore's, No. 159, secured several treasonable papers, and ordered into custody the two Wards. Issued a warrant against Moore, and endorsed it as a magistrate. George Cockson consented to let the officers and soldiers have possession of No. 159. Appointed a guard there.

'*Issued a warrant for searching for and*

securing all idle and disorderly persons, and all concealed arms.'

Literally, a 'General Warrant' without names, and issued and signed by the victim of general warrants! Then he goes on with fresh vigour:

'Ordered all public-houses to be shut at ten at night. . . . Patrolled the whole ward of Farringdon.'

He seems to have been the prompting spirit of action in the City, for he 'attended the Lord Mayor, and desired his lordship to direct the Sheriffs to raise the *posse comitatus.* He marched from the barracks at the head of a detachment of Colonel Twistleton's force. On Sunday, 'ordered a guard of twenty men to be at Johnston's, on Ludgate Hill, in consequence of this advertisement.' Issued warrants to seize sixty Spanish muskets. Inspected volunteers. 'At two in the morning had a conference with the Lord Mayor.' And so the indefatigable Colonel and Alderman Wilkes pursued his double function, issuing warrants and executing them.

Among the letters is a series from his

abandoned friend Potter, the scandalous son of an archbishop, full of wild, reckless coarseness and profanity. More interesting is another series dealing with that critical period in Wilkes' career, when he was exiled and almost destitute in Paris, and when, like some wild animal infuriated by hunger, he was threatening to break from his forests and invade civilized haunts. This series shows what an intrigue and even deception was carried on by Wilkes' own friends' to beguile and hoodwink the luckless outcast.* This grand object was to keep Wilkes 'quiet,' and soothe or decoy him into remaining in France, by the bait of money, which he so sorely needed. Fitzherbert, as we have seen,* was the intermediary employed; but besides Fitzherbert, Mr. Laughlin Macleane, who held a subordinate office in the Ministry, dealt more directly with Wilkes. It was felt that the return of Wilkes would be a most awkward embarrassment for the

* These papers I had not seen until a considerable portion of these volumes was printed. As they furnish such a curious picture of intrigue, they will not be found out of place in this chapter.

† See vol. i., p. 296.

Ministers, who would be fatally compromised if they attempted to restore him to his old position. Their only course, therefore, was to keep him in suspense, by dangling vague promises before him. It will be seen how misty these were. On January 3rd, 1766, Fitzherbert wrote to him: 'I do verily believe there is a disposition to get you home with credit, and therefore I wish you to stay till then, for your own sake. And what was offered you now, was, I hope, not thought of lasting (*sic*): therefore being precarious is no objection: neither is it clandestine, for those concerned don't care if their names for it were on Charing Cross.' But Laughlin Macleane was an Irishman, and in a letter of the same date, put before Wilkes a much more highly coloured prospect. According to him, all was nearly settled, and in the happiest way. He had seen Mr. Fitzherbert, who had laid Wilkes' letters before the Ministers. They had declared 'it was impossible to do what you wanted in the expeditious manner you wished; but they meant to do everything they possibly could

in the course of the winter, timing their measures as they found their strength. He then spoke of the 'temporary provision'—a sum of £500, to be increased to £1,000 and more, which was to be earnest of further favours they designed for him till a proper one could be arranged. Still he pressed one point. They could not consent to his return at present. He had reason to think that £500 would be added to the 'sum first designed for you.' Fitzherbert had represented that he thought it too scanty. The Marquis of Rockingham, in the course of the conversation Mr. Fitzherbert had with him, declared that 'everything designed to be done was from friendship, not from fear, that he did not conceive you ever would oppose the measures you had so strongly wrote for; but that he wished you to look upon yourself as entirely at liberty to espouse whatever party you please. He loved you as a friend, but did not dread you as an enemy.'

When Wilkes found that he was to be put off with a few hundred pounds and a number of compliments, he became very angry, and

flatly refused to accept the cash. It will be seen, here the amusing part of the comedy begins. Mr. Fitzherbert, who had but little money himself, was obliged to pledge his credit to the English banker in Paris, Foley, engaging to meet the £500 bill at Christmas. He could hardly credit Wilkes' refusal, and was naturally chagrined, as the negotiations would fail. 'I sent our friend Wilkes,' he wrote, 'word I would pay him £500 at Christmas. Mr. Foley showed me two drafts on me for £500 each, so I told him I would go and see how much I could get. On Thursday Mr. Macleane brought me a letter from Wilkes in the strongest terms, saying he would not receive a farthing of it. I asked Mr. Macleane why Wilkes altered his mind, he said he had not before apprehended it was to come from private friends. I wonder at this, for I knew of no other fund.' The bills were, however, left with the banker, to be at Wilkes' disposal, should he again change his mind.

Now was to come a surprise. It was not at all likely that Wilkes, harassed and

pressed for money, could withstand the temptation — the knowledge that drafts for £1,000 were lying waiting his pleasure in a bank close by. We find Mr. Fitzherbert writing on February 12th in some surprise that the drafts had been cashed. 'Mr. Foley (the banker) again sends to me for one of your £500 bills. I told him on seeing it I would pay it before Christmas, and before that day your letter came, saying you would not have it; so I thought I ought not to pay it against your consent. I am apprehensive Mr. Foley may be displeased if something is not paid him somehow. But, as I think, our people will keep to their professions and intentions.'

There was later much scandal and contention about this transaction. It was complained that Wilkes had secured the cash without completing his part of the bargain, which was that he should remain in Paris. The banker seemed to say that between Fitzherbert and Wilkes, he had been tricked. It was certain, however, that no repayment was to be obtained from Wilkes.

After he was thus committed, less exertion was used to pacify him. Macleane wrote reassuring accounts of a reconstructed Ministry, 'Care will, I hope, be taken of you.' He had spoken to Fitzherbert about the cash. 'I mentioned to him that you approved my agreeing to what he proposed as to the £1,500; and that I imagined he misunderstood you.' But it was impossible to hide the precarious state of the Ministry. 'They were breaking up,' he wrote; 'everything was in confusion.' All he could say was that 'he had constantly endeavoured to bring your affairs to a crisis, that was in the power of my friends. Even Onslow thought and purposed last week to go to the Minister in a body for you.'

CHAPTER XII.

L'ENVOI.

In these easy and placid enjoyments the close of Wilkes' life was passed. He was now become a loyal subject, and was found occasionally at Court. Wonderful to relate, he was said to be personally acceptable to his Majesty. The story went that the King once asked him about his 'old friend' Glynn. On which Wilkes, 'My friend, sir? He is no friend of mine. He was a *Wilkite,* which I never was.' There was a profound truth here. Dining with the Prince of Wales, who, as was his wont, was inveighing against his father, Wilkes proposed the King's health. 'Why, Wilkes,' said his Royal Highness, 'how long is it since you became so loyal?' To which the other gave a well-known witty reply, 'Ever since I had the

honour of knowing your Royal Highness!' This would have delighted his Majesty, supposing it were repeated to him, which Wilkes no doubt took care it should be.

It was stated by a high personage that, about 1772, a prince of the blood, then a mere boy, having been chid for some boyish fault, and wishing to take his revenge, is said to have done so by stealing to the King's apartment, shouting at the door 'Wilkes and No. 45 for ever!' and speedily running away. 'It is hardly necessary to add that his Majesty laughed at the trick with his accustomed good-humour.'

Even in his old age, it was remarked he retained all his charm of entertaining others. He grew feeble and emaciated, but, as Wraxall tells us, 'even in corporeal ruin, he formed the charm of the assembly.' In 1790 he had removed from the old unpretending house in Prince's Court to a more stately one in Grosvenor Square, whence, with unfailing diligence and punctuality, he walked into the City to attend to his duties.

At last, in December, 1797, he was taken

ill, and after a short sickness expired on Christmas Day. It was said that he met death 'with exemplary calmness and fortitude,' and it is to be presumed he departed from this world true to his principles of no religion. By a singular provision in his will, the coffin was carried to the vaults of the church in South Audley Street by six poor men. By his direction this inscription was to be placed over his grave: 'The remains of John Wilkes, the Friend of Liberty,' which is to be seen in the chapel. His will, made in 1795, after a few legacies to his illegitimate children, left all to his favourite daughter. But a painful surprise was destined to await his legatees. Wilkes, who all his life lived in dreams, had assured his family not long before his death that they would find a handsome balance at his banker's. But the gay patriot was as improvident in his provision for death as he had been for his life. When his man of business came to investigate his affairs, he found, to the consternation of the family, that Wilkes had died literally insolvent! After payment of debts, expenses,

etc., it appeared that two or three hundred pounds was all that was left. On the house in Grosvenor Square there was a mortgage for £1,500. Eventually his daughter inherited the Mead property from her mother, and became rich.

This disagreeable result was scarcely surprising. During his last three years he was maintaining three establishments—the one at Grosvenor Square, his Sandown Cottage, and the one at Kensington Gore. He was, moreover, a collector of 'curios' of all kinds, of books, Wedgwood, cameos, china, prints,* paintings, and furniture. Even then these were costly tastes. He entertained handsomely. A faithful City friend, Mr. Paice—the same, probably, whom 'Elia' mentions—undertook the disagreeable duty of breaking the news to the ladies. 'No interview,' he says, 'could be more distressing: no language can express the disappointment they felt. Their father had assured them but a little time

* I find among his papers a bill from a dealer, in which the famous 'Hundred-Guilder' etching is charged three guineas!

before his death that they would find a considerable balance at his banker's. Undoubtedly he thought so; but he was mistaken in the amount of the debt he owed to the City. The years 1794, 1795, and 1796 were very productive years, were very beneficial to him, and perhaps he might calculate upon those periods. But some of the other years were bad.'*

* This solicitor and executor describes, in characteristic style, this disagreeable discovery: 'After payment of his debts and funeral expenses, his property did not completely amount to one-fifth part of the few moderate legacies which he bequeathed. How irreconcilable to the language which he expressed not long before his death—both to the excellent Miss Wilkes, to Mrs. Arnold, and to Miss Harriet! On the complete confirmation of this unexpected circumstance, I waited (by desire of Miss Wilkes) on the two last-mentioned ladies, to announce to them the lamentable inferiority of Mr. Wilkes' circumstances, even to the small pecuniary legacies he had bequeathed. The humility and disinterested resignation with which they met this surprising discovery greatly engaged my esteem both to the mother and daughter. Miss Harriet associated with Miss Wilkes with increasing mutual satisfaction, expressed to me by Miss Wilkes in terms very honourable to Miss Harriet; and the last hours of the admirable lady's life (Miss Wilkes') were employed in active attention to terminate, with every advantage of her experience

MILE END PUBLIC LIBRARY

Miss Wilkes bore it admirably without a murmur. She set herself to the task of arranging his affairs, and discharging his debts. She also took on herself the charge of her sister, and did everything to realize the assets, so as to pay the legacies. In time she appears, owing to the inheritance of her mother's fortune, to have been in comfortable circumstances, and lived in the Grosvenor Square mansion until she died. She was fond of society, like her father. One of her chief friends was Mrs. Hastings, as her father's had been Warren Hastings.

'She was a lady,' says Almon, who knew her, 'of the sweetest disposition of temper, and humanity and goodness of heart; possess-

---

and superior abilities, the bequests which her father had left to Miss Harriet. The circumstances of Mr. Wilkes' narrow fortune involve a wide compass of opinions and remarks. No wonder it should appear incredible to the public: it did so to me; who thought it moderate to estimate him at from £8,000 to £10,000.' The worthy solicitor, who was but imperfectly acquainted with Wilkes' careless disposition, cannot get over his astonishment at a state of things 'so irreconcilable to the language which he expressed to me not long before his death.'

ing the most elegant accomplishments, and the highest and most amiable refinements of politeness. The suavity of her manners, captivating address, and dignity and ease in conversation, gained her the warmest and truest esteem of all who had the happiness of her acquaintance. Her letters need no encomium.' Much of this charm was no doubt owing to her foreign education, and her friendships with the 'great ladies' of French society.

Her death was sudden. In 1802, on March 12th, she had given a 'rout,' but after midnight felt herself ill, and went up to bed. A few minutes later she rang the bell for help, and a doctor was sent for, but before he could arrive she had expired. By her will, she had taken kind and thoughtful care of all connected with her—her cousins, her father's illegitimate daughter, servants, friends—and thus made up for Mr. Wilkes' neglect.*

* She appears to have been worth over twenty thousand pounds. She had her father's and mother's estates in Bucks, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and Beds, which she

Wilkes' illegitimate son, John Smith, was carefully educated at various schools, and

---

left to her cousin, the American Charles Wilkes, subject to an annuity to his father and mother of £150. She left about £12,000 in legacies to Harriet Wilkes and various cousins, with small sums as souvenirs to the Duchesses of Cruzol and of La Tremouille, with two thousand pounds to the mother of these ladies—the Duchess of Chatillon. The other minor trifling bequests are so thoughtfully affectionate that it will be interesting to quote them here :

'I give to Mrs. Gordon, wife of Colonel Gordon, the sum of twenty pounds. I give and bequeath my row of large pearls to Lady Shuldham, in affectionate testimony of my value for her friendship to my dear father and myself. I desire my executors to offer Mr. Henry Williams sixty pounds, as a token of my thankfulness and satisfaction. I give unto my before-mentioned cousin, Lady Baker, the silver cup that was the honourable gift of the City of London to my dear and honoured father; and also my plate of all descriptions. I give and bequeath to her eldest daughter before mentioned all my diamonds, ornaments, and trinkets, not otherwise bequeathed.

'I desire my respected and dear friends, Mr. and Mrs Hastings, to accept of the prints and bronzes in my eating-parlour; and I give to my cousin, Lady Baker, the picture painted by Zoffany, of my dear father and myself, and the portrait of me done in crayons by Hoare. All my books not mentioned in the catalogue of my honoured father's library (except the "Gems of Worlidge") I give Miss Mary Hayley Baker, with my drawings; and the

finally at Harrow. He was then sent to an academy at Hamburg, in Germany, and was

---

"Gems" just mentioned I give to Miss Harriet Wilkes, as also the gold watch which belonged to my father. My china, both useful and ornamental, I give to my cousin, Lady Baker; and my five-guinea piece of King William and Queen Mary to my worthy friend Mrs. Trapaud; my two other five-guinea pieces I desire may be accepted by the Miss Meads, of Portman Street. I most particularly desire that my executors would deliver all my honoured father's library, according to the catalogue, to Mr. Peter Elmsley, of Sloane Street, with the remaining copies of his "Catullus" and "Theophrastus," to be sold (at my request) under his direction; and after taking for himself the fifty pounds I desire him to accept, my will is, that the remainder of the produce should be appropriated for the benefit of the widows and children of decayed freemen of the City of London, at the discretion of the two senior Aldermen and the Chamberlain of the City of London for the time being. I desire, also, that all manuscripts belonging to me, of whatever kind, may be faithfully delivered to the said Mr. Peter Elmsley, to whose judgment and delicacy I confide them. All the remainders of my different bequests I give and bequeath to the Archbishop of Canterbury and to the Archbishop of York for the time being, in trust for charitable purposes; and anything not specified, I commit to the discretion of my executors.

'I give and bequeath to my waiting-woman at the time of my decease all my wearing apparel; and five guineas each to those of my servants who may have been in my service more than one year, leaving ten guineas each

allowed to travel in Germany. All through his life the fiction of his being Wilkes' nephew was kept up, and we find him always addressing his parent as 'My dear uncle.' He was then obtained a commission in the East India Company's service, in which he continued many years.

In the Wilkes family there is certainly to be found a strain of eccentricity, which is accountable for some of the extravagances which we have been following. For this we

---

to those who may have lived in my service above five years. I give ten pounds to the poor of St. George's parish, Hanover Square; and ten pounds to the poor of St. Sepulchre's parish in the City. I request to be interred in the same vault as my honoured and dear father, in Grosvenor Chapel. I desire my executors to make some donation out of my property to the poor of the different places where I have estates, besides those already mentioned. I desire Mr. Paice to accept the pictures not otherwise mentioned.'

In reference to Charles Wilkes, the principal legatee, I may add here that I am inclined to doubt whether he can have been the Commodore Wilkes who became so conspicuous in the American war of secession. Having, however, found it stated in all the American biographies that he was 'the nephew of the famous John Wilkes,' I feel there is no ground for rejecting the relationship.

might even go back to the time of old Edward Wilkes, the great-grandfather of John, who had strangely christened his four children Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Joane. The most singular of the family was certainly Wilkes' sister Mary, who exhibits a career of adventure and oddity combined. Beloe, the sexagenarian, knew her whole history, which he thus recounts:

'She had a large portion of his intellectual endowments, and was very little his inferior in vivacity, humour, and wit. She was married first to an opulent merchant, Samuel Stork, who was succeeded in his business by his head clerk, Mr. Hayley, whose fortunes were made by his obtaining the hand of the widow. He was afterwards Alderman Hayley, and was a near relation of Hayley the poet—a plain, sensible, good sort of man, wholly absorbed in commercial pursuits; and soon found it expedient, for the sake of a quiet life, to suffer his *cara sposa* to do as she liked. She was exceedingly well informed, had read a great deal, possessed a fine taste, and, with respect to literary

merit, considerable judgment. She accordingly sought, with much avidity, the society of those who were distinguished in the world by their talents and their writings. When the expression of *those* is used, it must be understood to apply to men only, for on all occasions she was at no pains to conceal her contemptuous opinion of her own sex; and it was no uncommon thing to see her at table, surrounded by ten or twelve eminent men, without a single female. She had great conversational talents, and unfortunately, like her brother, she seldom permitted any ideas of religion, or even of delicacy, to impose a restraint upon her observations.

'Her disregard of propriety was also and conspicuously manifested on other occasions. She invariably attended all the more remarkable trials at the Old Bailey, where she regularly had a certain place reserved for her. When the discussion or trial was of such a nature that decorum, and indeed the judges themselves, desired women to withdraw, she never stirred from her place, but persisted in remaining to hear the whole, with

the most unmoved and unblushing earnestness of attention.

'She every summer made an excursion to such parts of the kingdom as she had not before visited, and was always accompanied by a single male friend, who for a great number of years was an American gentleman, connected with the house of Hayley by the ties of mercantile interests. Upon one occasion she visited the Highlands with this gentleman, and though accustomed to a very luxurious style of living, she submitted to the greatest privations and hardships in the indulgence of her curiosity. This, indeed, was unbounded; it extended to the manufactories, manners, high and low, and worse than low, in whatever place she visited. Her professed object was to see everybody, and everything, which deserved or excited attention. She wrote to her brother, John Wilkes, from Scotland in this strain:

'"Dear Brother,—The rain has been and still is so incessant, that I have serious intentions of constructing another ark, into which,

however, I shall be exceedingly scrupulous whom I admit. As I know your particular taste, I shall have a cabin for your use, fitted up and adorned with *Scripture and other prints.* But I will on no consideration whatever suffer any unclean animals to enter; for example, nothing shall prevail upon me to admit either Scotch men or Scotch women," etc., etc.

'She had a house after her husband's death, and perhaps before, at Bromley, the measured distance of which from her town residence in Great Aliffe Street, Goodman's Fields, was precisely ten miles. She had four beautiful black horses, and on entering her carriage she never failed to take her watch in her hand, and her coachman was sure to have a sorry bout of it if he exceeded the space of an hour either going or coming. She had also a strong predilection for the drama, had a box at each of the theatres, and generally went from one house to another. She allowed her coachman but half an hour to drive from Goodman's Fields to either theatre.

'She was particularly nice in her carriage, which was always built in the highest and most expensive style of fashion, and kept with particular neatness. She had one day a rich citizen with her in one of these excursions to or from Bromley, who, from want of observation or attention, did not perceive that the glass near which he sat was drawn up, and he was so thoughtless as to spit upon it. She indulged in much laughter, and remarked that her coachman could not possibly have had a greater compliment paid to his care of the glasses. She had a daughter, who did not appear to be exempted by her relationship from the general, indeed the universal, dislike, or rather contempt, which she avowed for all her sex. They were on the very worst terms possible; and so reluctant was she, on her daughter's marriage, to perform the stipulations required by old Hayley's will, that the most harsh and rigorous proceedings were found unavoidably necessary, and she was arrested on a Saturday night on coming from the play, when she had thousands at her command,

and detained, with her male friend, who always accompanied her, in a sponging-house till the Monday morning.

'In the end, she served this same gentleman a most slippery trick. He was a native of Nantucket, and as Mr. Hayley's commercial connections were principally in America, he was one of their most intimate and valuable correspondents. On coming to England, he took up his residence in H.'s house, and on his death, undertook the conduct of the great and extensive concern for the widow. He was her most intimate counsellor, confidant, and friend, embarked his fortunes with hers, attended her everywhere and on every occasion, and was in all respects the master of her house and director of her family. At the conclusion of the American War, it was found expedient that some confidential person should go over to America to see after the property still remaining in that country, and which was not much less in value than a hundred thousand pounds. Mr. R. offered himself for the purpose. The lady's

attachment to him was so strong that she determined not to part with him, and resolved to accompany him. Before they embarked, it was determined, on consultation, that they should be married, and the Archbishop's license was accordingly obtained. From some cause or other the solemnization was deferred, and they mutually covenanted that it should take place on their arrival in America. They accordingly set sail lovingly together. When they got to America, they were much noticed and feasted, and were hospitably received even by General Washington himself, and the most considerable persons of the country. Still the marriage was not solemnized. Almost the first letters which came out from England brought the unwelcome information that the presence of Mrs. H. or her agent and representative was indispensably necessary to secure the property which was left behind, no less considerable than that after which they were in search. The gentleman of whom we are speaking voluntarily undertook this mission

also; and leaving his friend and mistress, with the promise, and indeed determination, to return immediately and perform his contract, he appointed a young mercantile man, of the name of Jeffery, to transact his business in his absence, and departed for England.

'But mark the waywardness and inconstancy of some females; he had hardly set foot on British land, when a packet arrived from a correspondent in America, with the information that the lady had found solitude in that distant part of the globe so irksome, and indeed so intolerable, that in one short week after his departure she had united herself in indissoluble bonds with the young man whom he had left as his mercantile representative. There were no writings, settlements, or contracts, but one simple deed, stating that the longest liver should take all the property.

'Before the narrative of Mrs. H. is resumed, the sequel of the fortunes of this disappointed gentleman, as far as they are known, shall be added. His grief was probably neither very acute nor very permanent; indeed, he was

already beginning to feel his situation to be a sort of unmanly thraldom; and there can be very little doubt that, if he had been either pressing or importunate, he might, *mutatis mutandis*, have been the happy bridegroom in America, rather than the forsaken lover in England. But he was a man with a great spirit of enterprise, had seen much of the world, and was anxious to see more. He had also some very lofty schemes of mercantile aggrandizement, particularly with respect to the South Sea Whale Fishery. He was an exceedingly ingenious mechanic, and had invented a machine for the more certain destruction of whales, which had the approbation of some of our most accomplished mechanics. With this view, not meeting in this country, or from our Government, the encouragement he wanted, and the assistance which he asked, he removed to France.

'The French Revolution had commenced, and he received from the ruling powers the most munificent promises, and so much immediate and effectual assistance, that by their aid and countenance he formed one establish-

ment, upon a very large scale, at Dunkirk, and another at l'Orient. Here, for some years, he prosecuted his plans with such success, that he had the fairest prospect of acquiring the greatest opulence. Unfortunately, one of his partners at l'Orient laboured under the suspicion of being an aristocrat, in the atrocious times of Robespierre. Suspicion was but another term with this sanguinary crew for guilt, and the guillotine was (to use their abominable jargon) in constant requisition. This most worthy and excellent man, with little, perhaps with no form of trial, was put to death, and his friend and patron, the American, escaped with life only. All the property was seized, plundered, or confiscated, and the whole establishment fell to the ground. Whether he yet survives, or if he does, in what situation he remains, was unknown when this was written. Mr. R. had great talents, many amiable qualities, and, in those respects, deserved a far better fate.

'In a very short interval, a separation was mutually thought expedient. The lady, as before observed, had confided everything to

the generosity of her husband, and, with such an allowance as he thought proper to make her, she took a very early opportunity of re-crossing the Atlantic; and after a short residence in London, fixed herself at Bath, where she passed

'"An old age of cards."'

A more direct link with the old generation appeared at a dinner where was Thomas Carlyle. Among the company, as he describes it, was Jeffrey, of critical fame, and his second wife. 'This second wife,' says Carlyle, 'the American Miss Wilkes, was from Pennsylvania—actual brother's daughter of our demagogue Wilkes. She was the sister of Commodore Wilkes, who boarded the *Trent* some years ago.'* Now in this he must be accurate, as he must have learned the parentage of the lady from Jeffrey himself.

* 'Reminiscences,' ii. 34.

INDEX.

Allen, killed by the soldiers, ii. 8

Brass Crosby, Lord Mayor, his action on press warrants, ii. 172; commits messenger of House of Commons, ii. 174; ordered to attend in his place, and his behaviour, ii. 179; committed to the Tower, ii. 181
Butler, Charles, his regard for Wilkes, ii. 247

Camden, Lord, his second judgment on general warrants, 232
Capias Utlagatum, 349
Chatham, Lord, his advocacy of Wilkes, ii. 81; his hysterical enthusiasm for Beckford, 109; discussion with Lord Rockingham, 112; 'cornered' by the City patriots, 114
Chartreuse convent, visit of Wilkes to, 291
Chesterfield, Lord, satirical remark of, 211
'Chrysal,' account of Medmenham monks in, 37
Churchill, his share in the *North Briton*, 75; scandalous conduct of, 185; threatened, 188; his death, 273
Churchill, C., the younger, account of, ii. 280
Commons, House of, its arbitrary acts, ii. 54, *note*
Curry the printer's deposition as to the printing of the 'Essay on Woman,' 202

Cust, Sir John, Speaker, ridiculed by Wilkes, 344

Barnards, the, their treatment by Wilkes, ii. 59
Barrington, Lord, letter of thanks to the soldiers, ii. 10
Baxter, his regard for Wilkes, 18, and ii. 295
Beckford, Lord Mayor, account of, ii. 85; incidents of his reply to the King, ii. 107
Beloe, 'the sexagenarian,' his account of Miss M. Wilkes, ii. 306; his anecdotes of Wilkes, ii. 270
Blacket, Sir E., eccentricity of, ii. 45, *note*
Boswell and Wilkes, ii. 250; his dinners for Wilkes and Johnson, ii. 252; at Wilkes' ball, ii. 225

Dashwood, Sir F., one of the Medmenham monks, 31; his villa described by Wilkes, 40, *note*
Dibdin, Thomas, his recollections of Wilkes, ii. 238, *note*
Diderot, letter of congratulation on Wilkes' election, ii. 333
Dilke, Sir C. W., his case for Wilkes, 28
Dilettante Society, sketch of, 33; its pictures, 34
Dingley, candidate opposed to Wilkes, ii. 41, and *note*
Dunn, his supposed attempt on Wilkes' life, 227
Dyce, Rev. Mr., owner of a copy of the 'Essay on Woman,' 199

Egremont, Lord, his oppression of Wilkes, 141; death, 175
'Essay on Woman,' account of, 190; submitted to Pitt, 251, *note*; before the House of Lords, 209

Fitzherbert, Mr., negotiates with Wilkes, ii. 290
Forbes', Captain, quarrel with Wilkes, 171
Fox mobbed, ii. 179
Francis, Sir P., his defence of Wilkes in his old age, ii. 67; his early support of Wilkes, ii. 192, *note*

Franklin, Dr., his sketch of the Wilkite disorders, i. 330

Garrick's answer to Wilkes on his acting, ii. 60, *note*
General Warrant, The, issued, 133; violent proceedings under, 136; debate on the abstract question, 255
Gloucester, Bishop of, reprobates the 'Essay on Woman,' 210
Grafton, Duke of, his behaviour to Wilkes in prison, ii. 168
Greville, Mr. George, his speech on Wilkes' case, ii. 97; former letter to Wilkes, ii. 32

Halifax, Lord, his despotic treatment of Wilkes, 141; his devices for eluding Wilkes' actions at law, 162; indemnified by the Crown in Wilkes' actions, ii. 19; their total cost, *ib.*
Harley, Alderman, his courageous behaviour, ii. 226
Hayward, Mr., his 'Franciscan' theory, ii. 65, *note;* his refutation of a statement of Lord Macaulay's, ii. 197, *note*
Hertford, Lord, difficulty as to receiving Wilkes in Paris, 240
Hogarth's quarrel with Wilkes and Churchill, 83, 109
D'Holbah, his letter of congratulation to Wilkes, ii. 222
Horne, his connection with, and early support of, Wilkes, ii. 71; ridicule of the King, ii. 105, *note;* his rupture with Wilkes, ii. 145; his 'faction' in the Society, ii. 149; scurrilous charges against Wilkes, ii. 151; worsted by Wilkes in the Society, ii. 156; plot for embroiling printers with the House of Commons, ii. 167; his satirical description of an order of the House, ii. 168, *note;* attacked by Junius, ii. 192

'Jemmy Twitcher,' 211
Johnson, Dr., attacked by Wilkes, 58, *note;* their meeting at Dilly's described, 253
Junius, his letters modelled on the *North Briton*, ii. 62; pleads for Wilkes' pardon, 64; hence presumption of Francis being the writer, ii. 63; interests himself in the election of Lord Mayor, ii. 191; attacks Horne, ii. 191; mysterious communication to Wilkes, ii. 194; presses him to support Brass Crosby, ii. 196; this incident a proof of Francis being the author of the 'Letters,' 196, *note*

Kidgell, Parson, agent of Sandwich, 192
King's Bench Prison, ii. 1
King, the, rebukes the timidity of the Sheriff's officer, 337; advises severity in the St. George's Fields Riot, ii. 5; directs the soldiers to be thanked, ii 10; his annoyance from the 'Remonstrance,' ii. 96 *et seq.;* takes part in the elections for City Sheriff, ii. 189; interferes in Wilkes's contest for a mayoralty, ii. 207; advises commitment of Lord Mayor, etc., for their treatment of the messenger of the House of Commons, ii. 177. His letters to Ministers, *passim.*

Lee, Sir W., ridiculed by Wilkes, 229
Lloyd, account of, 55
Luttrell, Colonel, candidate against Wilkes, ii. 44; seated by House of Commons, ii. 52
Luttrell, Lady E., account of, ii. 46
Luttrell, Lady A., Duchess of Cumberland, ii. 48
Luttrell Family, account of, ii. 44
Luttrelstown, now Woodlands, *ib.*
Luttrells, the, extravagances of, ii. 200

Mead, Miss, her marriage to Wilkes, 20; and separation from him, 22
Medmenham monks, account of the, 31
Medmenham Abbey, description of, 35
McQuirk, the chairman, case of, 63, *note*
Mackintosh, Sir J., on Wilkes, ii. 249
Macleane, Laughlin, his letters to Wilkes, ii. 291
Mansfield, Lord, his judgment reversing Wilkes' outlawry, ii. 12, *note;* his presumed enmity to Wilkes, 258; his alteration of 'purport' to 'tenor,' *ib.;* pronounced Wilkes 'the most perfect gentleman,' vii.
Martin, his quarrel and duel with Wilkes, 212
Mawbey, Sir J., his ludicrous advocacy of Wilkes in the printer's affair, ii. 183

North Briton founded, 73; 'No. 45' published, and burnt by the hangman, 226
Norton, his comparison of a 'drunken porter,' 256; advises on Wilkes's arrest, 337

Oliver, his spirited defence in the affair of the printers, ii. 180; refuses to serve as Sheriff with Wilkes, ii. 188; sent to the Tower, ii. 181
Onslow, Col., on imported patriot aldermen, 221

'Philo-Wilkes,' ii. 283
Pillory, the, Williams sentenced to, for publishing 'No. 45,' 272
Pitt, Mr., a patron of Wilkes, 63
Pratt (Lord Camden), his judgment of, on the General Warrant, 157
Printers, account of the incident of the, ii. 166; arrested by messenger of the House of Commons, ii. 173
Proclamation, illegal royal, for arrest of printers, ii. 169

Remonstrances, the, 93 ; incidents and scenes connected with, ii. 97 to 102, 105
Reporting debates, a violation of privilege, ii. 166
Revitsky, anecdote of, ii. 219
Reynolds, T., his recollections of Wilkes, ii. 245
Reynolds, Wilkes's agent, account of, ii. 157
Rigby, Mr., curious proposal to, from Wilkes, 92
Riot in St. George's Fields, account of, ii. 7
Roach, 'Tiger,' account of, ii. 50, *note ;* his odd invitation to Wilkes, ii. 283

Sandwich, Lord, described, 44 ; denounces the 'Essay on Woman,' 209 ; his good opinion of Wilkes, ii. 248 ; his coarse remark to, ii. 274
Sawbridge, ii. 88
Secretaries of State, their correspondence with Wilkes on his arrest, 165
Sheridan, his verses on Wilkes, ii. 242
Smith, J., Wilkes's illegitimate son, ii. 305
Smollett, attacks Wilkes, 70 ; allied with Wilkes, 57
Sterne, Lydia, her treatment by Wilkes, 281

Taylor, Mr. John, his recollections of Wilkes, ii. 268
Temple, Lord, Lord Macaulay's account of overcharged, 45 ; his regard for Wilkes, 47 ; his constant substantial aid to Wilkes, 89 ; his letter of adhesion to Wilkes in prison, ii. 4
Townshend, C., at Leyden with Wilkes, 19
Townshend, Alderman, account of, ii. 87 ; his indecent attacks on the Princess Dowager, ii. 205, *note ;* elected Lord Mayor, ii. 208
Trevethick, ridiculed by Wilkes, ii. 120, *note*

Whitehead, Paul, account of, 41

Weymouth, Lord, his letters to the Lords-Lieutenant, ii. 342
Wilkes, Heaton, candidate for City office, ii. 161
Wilkes, Mary, her death, ii. 302 ; and will, *ib.*, *note*
WILKES, JOHN, his obelisk at Ludgate Circus, i. 1 ; left a fragment of autobiography, 3 ; origin and account of his family, 7 ; trait of his childhood, 11 ; his tutors, *ib.* ; sent to Leyden, 15 ; Dr. Carlyle's recollections of him, 16 ; his friendship with Baxter, 18 ; marries Miss Mead, 20 ; separates from her, 22 ; his partial account of their quarrel, 23 ; stands for Berwick, and is defeated, 26 ; his dissipation, 28 ; attempts to set aside his wife's settlement, 29 ; his associates in vice, 31 ; his description of Medmenham Abbey, 35 ; 'John of Aylesbury,' 38 ; his practical joke at Medmenham, 39 ; Wilkes at mess, 47 ; succeeds Sir F. Dashwood as Colonel of Militia, 48 ; elected to Parliament for Aylesbury, 49 ; arrangement with Mr. Pitt and Potter, 50 ; advances to Pitt, 52 ; adopts journalism, 55 ; applies for place three times, 61 ; fails in his attempts, 64 ; offers himself to Pitt, 64 ; pamphlet on Spain, 67 ; his jest on Dr. Douglas, 69 ; connection with Smollett, 70, who attacks him, 71 ; the *North Briton*, 73 ; alliance with Churchill, 76 ; intimate correspondence with him, 78 *et seq.* ; quarrel with Hogarth, 82 ; with Johnson, 85 ; encouraged by Lord Temple, 89 ; applies for Government offices, 92 ; quarrel and duel with Lord Talbot, 95 *et seq.* ; dispute with Lord Bute's son, 107 ; caricatured by Hogarth, 110 ; specimen of his attacks on Lord Bute, 112 ; publication of 'No. 45,' 125 ; a 'general warrant' issued against him, 133 ; Wilkes' account of his arrest,

138; of his examination by the Secretaries of State, 141; sent to the Tower, 150; address to the Court of Common Pleas, 152; dismissed from the Militia, 156; discharged by order of the Court of Common Pleas, 160; his speech of thanks, 161; correspondence with the Secretaries of State, 164; dissatisfied with Lord Temple, 170; quarrel with Captain Forbes, 171; sets out for Menin to fight him, 183; Churchill's remonstrances, 181; publishes an 'Essay on Woman,' 190; question of his share in the authorship discussed, 197; goes to Paris, 201; plot to bring the 'Essay' before the House of Lords, 206; the *North Briton* libel brought before the House of Commons, 212; Wilkes denounced by Pitt, 215; his quarrel and duel with Martin, 218; severely wounded, 221; his jokes and unabated spirit, 224; supposed plot for his assassination, 227; his successful actions at law against the Government, 232; ordered by the House of Commons to receive physicians, 234; flies to Paris, 238; his popularity there, 241; his gloomy forebodings, 242; declines to attend the House of Commons, 245; expelled the House, 248; resentment against Pitt, 249; outlawed, 260; enjoys himself in Paris, 263; pressed for money, 265; his pleasant advice to a friend on parting with a mistress, 266; attends Churchill's death-bed, 274; their plan for a tour in Italy, 275; plans an edition of Churchill's Works, which is never executed, *ib.*; his 'History of England,' 277; never executed, 280; promises to write a 'Life of Sterne,' and fails to do so, 281; address to the Aylesbury electors, 284; starts on his tour to Italy, 288; account of his progress, 289 *et seq.*;

returns home in haste on a change of Ministry, 294; supposed plan of a pension, etc., for him, 296; but 'nothing is done,' 298; Colonel Fitzroy negotiates with him, 309; Grafton, Duke of, his treatment of Wilkes, 315; attends chapel at the Hague, 321; arrives in London, and appeals to the King for pardon, 322; candidate for the City, 325; defeated, stands for Middlesex, 327; 'Wilkes and Liberty' and general riot, 329; elected, 331; the King opposed to his pardon, 336; surrenders himself to the Court of King's Bench, 339; his happy ridicule of Sir T. Cust, 347; arrested under a '*capias utlagatum*,' 349; sent to the King's Bench Prison, 351. Letter from prison to Lord Temple, ii. 2; denounces the 'bloody massacre' of St. George's Fields, 10; appeal against outlawry decided against him, 12; his criticism on Lord Mansfield's judgment, 16, *note*; sentenced for publishing the *North Briton*, 17; cost of his law-suits defrayed by Lord Temple, 19; final breach with Lord Temple, 20; prepares a petition to Parliament, 22; negotiation to prevent his presenting it, 23; petition to the King for 'clemency,' 24; his inflammatory comments on Lord Weymouth's letter to the Justices, 25; brought before the two Houses, 27; his bold demeanour to the House of Commons, 33; his petition rejected, and the comments on Lord Weymouth's letter voted 'a scandalous libel,' 37; expelled the House, *ib.*; re-elected, 39; re-expelled, 40; elected and expelled once more, 43; opposed by Colonel Luttrell, 44; elected and unseated, 51; 'testimonials' to him when imprisoned, 55; his treatment of Mr. Barnard, and amusing sequel, 59; message to Garrick, 60, *note*; obsequious

offer to Mr. Pitt, 65 ; his pamphlet on Spain, 68 ; challenge from Maclean, 68 ; elected alderman, 70 ; connection with Horne, 71 ; society for paying his debts, 76 ; supported by Lord Chatham, 81 ; released from prison, his debts paid, 84 ; supported by Beckford, Townshend, Sawbridge, and Oliver, 85 *et seq.;* draws up a petition for the City, 92 ; suggests a mode of annoying the court, 113 ; ridicules the officials, 120, *note ;* affection for his daughter 'Polly,' 123 ; letters to her on good living, 129 ; visits Bath—an account of his proceedings there, 134 ; account of his acquaintance and quarrel with Horne, 146 ; defeats Horne in the Society, 149 ; scurrilous recriminations between him and Horne, 151 ; puts forward his brother Heaton for the Chamberlainship, 161 ; accused of 'hanging back' in the printer's case, 172 ; commits one Carpenter for arresting a printer under the proclamation, *ib.;* message from him to Junius, and correspondence, 194 ; Wilkes ordered to 'attend,' but not 'in his place,' 177 ; baffles the House of Commons, 182 ; undignified action of the latter, 184 ; his letter to the Speaker, 185, *note;* boast that he had intimidated the House during his mayoralty, 186 ; contest for sheriffdom, 187 ; elected, 190 ; praised by Junius, 192 ; interchanges courtesies, and concerts plans with Junius, 195 ; his conduct as sheriff, 198-203 ; intrigues to bring about a conflict with the House of Lords, 202 ; proposed as Lord Mayor, 205 ; opposed and defeated by Townshend, 207 ; violence of the two factions, 209 ; prepares a fresh 'Remonstance,' 210 ; ingenious plan for destroying Townshend, 211 ; and for engaging the House in a new

conflict, 214 ; elected to Parliament, 216 ; his conduct in the House, 217 ; elected Lord Mayor, 221 ; his pleasant letter to Garrick, 223, *note ;* his Mayoralty Ball, 225 ; at Court, 228 ; compels the House to expunge the 'resolutions,' 229 ; review of his constitutional services, 232 ; elected Chamberlain, 236 ; his behaviour to Dibdin, 238, *note ;* again elected to Parliament, 240 ; becomes loyal, 243 ; takes a cottage at Sandown, 242 ; friendship with Mr. Charles Butler, 247 ; with Lord Sandwich, 248 ; opinion of Boswell and his 'Life of Johnson,' 251 ; his *bon mots*, as reported by Boswell, 267, *note ;* other specimens of his wit, 268 ; his taste for letters, printing, etc., 274 : his letters, 278, *et seq.;* his 'Dining Diary,' 287, *note ;* his behaviour during the Gordon Riots, 288 ; his negotiations in exile reviewed, 290 ; 'Never a Wilkite,' 297 ; death, 298 ; 'dies bankrupt,' 299

Wilkes, Mary, Wilkes' sister, account of, 306

THE END.

BILLING & SONS, PRINTERS, GUILDFORD.

THE PEOPLE'S PALACE
Beaumont Trust
FOR EAST LONDON

PEOPLE'S PALACE
LIBRARY.

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE
LIBRARY
TORONTO